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FATHER STANTON

FATHER STANTON

OF

ST. ALBAN'S, HOLBORN

A Memoir

BY

JOSEPH CLAYTON
AUTHOR OF 'FATHER DOLLING: A MEMOIR,' ETC.

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PREFACE

THE story of Father Stanton's life is the story of a clergyman of the Church of England, who for fifty years was curate in the parish of St. Alban's, Holborn. Taken baldly and literally this statement promises nothing of interest, perhaps, beyond the length of service, until the name and title of this curate catches us—'Father Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn.'

There it is. And at the phrase we recall something of the life of high adventure and romance lived in the back streets of Holborn, and lived joyously and fully by a man of faith and goodwill. We recall the powerful preacher, the tender minister of souls, the champion of the common people, the 'Dad' of countless children now grown to full estate, the rare and distinguished personality to whom all — save human affection —that this passing world could offer was but dross.

To the world this life of Father Stanton's presented the eternal paradox: *Qui invenit animam suam, perdet illam: et qui perdiderit animam suam propter me, inveniet eam.* Finding his life in the slums of Holborn and in the Church of St. Alban, he lost it to the world; and thus losing his life in the cause of CHRIST and his brethren, he found

the life eternal. The rulers of the Established Church and the powerful ones of this world, seeing that Stanton neither courted their favours nor desired their praise, naturally, in turn, left him severely alone, or but noticed his existence to shake a disapproving head or utter some word of censure.

But censured by authority, Stanton could always fall back on the love of his people at St. Alban's, Holborn—his 'children'—to whom he was not only 'father' and pastor, but friend and 'pal.' After a ministry of forty-five years, he could say gladly, 'GOD has given me something better than emolument, and far better than position; GOD has given to me, blessed be His holy Name, the love of my fellow-men.' And so greatly gifted by this love, the world and its honours were well lost to Father Stanton. Unencumbered by the responsibilities imposed in the service of Mammon, he marched the more gaily, and to the end neither age nor experience could dim the vision or check the glad morning confidence that were his at the outset of life.

> '. . . A friend to truth! of soul sincere.
> In action faithful, and in honour clear;
> Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
> Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend.'

These words of Pope's on Addison have been applied, and justly enough, to Father Stanton by his friends. Others will think of Stanton as the fearless knight, the chivalrous crusader, 'faithful servant, valiant soldier,' of the Cross of CHRIST.

> 'A knight there was, and that a worthy man,
> That from the time that he began
> To riden out, he loved chivalry,
> Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy.

Full worthy was he in his lorde's war,
And thereto had he ridden, no man farre.

* * * * *

He never yet no villainy ne said
In all his life unto no manner wight:
He was a very perfect, gentle knight.'

Others, again, will always carry in their hearts the remembrance of the Minister of the Gospel, the Good Samaritan binding up the wounds of the fallen, and pouring in oil and wine, and promising the sweet assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

So many-sided was Father Stanton, so wide was the appeal he made, so varied is the company that loved him and honoured him in that fifty years' service.

Heroic as he was, the place of his labours, the Church of St. Alban the Martyr, Holborn, is no less famous, too—famous for its battles with the forces of 'law and order' in Church and State, famous for its clergy with whom Stanton worked so long and so loyally. Always will that church —a city set on a hill in the Church of England— be associated with the names of Alexander Heriot Mackonochie, its first Vicar; Arthur Henry Stanton, its fifty years' curate; the Rev. R. A. J. Suckling, Vicar since 1883; the Rev. E. F. Russell, curate since 1867; and the Rev. G. R. Hogg, curate since 1874.

The time of Stanton's ministry was notable. It was a time of revival in the Church of England, when many Catholic doctrines and practices were claimed as the rightful heritage of the Church of England people, to the astonishment and dismay of Bishops, Judges, and Members of Parliament. The claim was stoutly resisted, and conflicts raged in the Law Courts over questions of ceremonial,

only decided in a number of cases by the imprisonment or resignation of the offending clergyman. Mainly the battle turned, as it did at the Reformation, on the doctrine of the Eucharist—for 'it is the Mass that matters'—the Catholic-minded clergy maintaining that the service of Holy Communion in the Book of Common Prayer was the order of the Sacrifice of the Mass, while the ecclesiastical authorities of the Established Church denied that it was anything of the sort. To-day, when the Church of England clergy are largely left undisturbed to preach what doctrines they will, and the controversy over ritual has ended in general toleration, only disturbed by occasional outbursts of lessening Protestant energy, the indebtedness of Anglicans for the present liberties of worship to the stalwarts of 1860 to 1885 cannot be too heartily acknowledged. In the front rank of those stalwarts were Mackonochie and Stanton at St. Alban's, Holborn—Mackonochie bearing the brunt of fifteen years of litigation.

But lawsuits, episcopal charges against Ritualism, and the long-drawn-out battle over the lawfulness of certain Catholic practices in the Church of England, were only one feature of Stanton's fifty years at St. Alban's. It was a period of political reform, and the quickening of a movement towards democracy; a time when old *laissez faire* Liberalism passed away before the heralds of social reform, and individualism as a social creed was shattered by the prophets of economic socialism. From this democratic movement Father Stanton did not stand aside.

The time and the place and the man alike were great, and the whole story of Stanton's life amongst us is resplendent with the rare and shining quali-

ties he possessed, and the brilliant gifts used so lavishly in the service of his fellows.

Here no attempt is made to set out in refined detail the incidents of the wonderful life lived by this curate of St. Alban's. A full and complete biography must necessarily be yet to come. All that the present writer can do is to set down something of what he knows, recall certain events, in order in the life of Father Stanton; give, as he heard it, the message of the preacher as far as possible in the preacher's own words—and sketch in outline the portrait—leaving to the reader to fill in, as he will, the obvious omissions.

It may be this little book, this brief memoir of the man at whose feet so many of us sat, will be acceptable as a tribute of lasting love to some of that uncounted multitude to whom Arthur Stanton was 'Dad' and 'Father,' and that its pages will help to keep his memory green in our day and generation and for many a year to come. It may be, too, that others, to whom 'Father Stanton' was but a name, reading this memoir will discern in it the attempted portrait of a brave, strong, and tender English gentleman, who lived and laboured for his kind as a Christian priest at a critical time in the history of his Church and his land; and looking on the faulty portrait they will at least think it well that the attempt was made, lest otherwise they might never have known what manner of man this Father Stanton was.

The writer's personal recollections of St. Alban's extended over thirty years, and he is greatly indebted to the Rev. Stewart Headlam, the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell, Mr. E. J. Peters, and Mr. Frederick Verinder for valuable help. For printed matter he is no less indebted to the St. Alban's, Holborn, *Parish Magazine*, and *Monthly Paper, The*

Treasury, *The Church Reformer*, *The Church Times*, the 'Memoir of Alexander Heriot Mackonochie,' by E. A. T., and 'St. Alban the Martyr, Holborn: A History of Fifty years,' by G. W. E. Russell.

But this memoir, though I have taken every pains to ensure accuracy in matters of fact, must not be taken as an 'official' biography.

J. C.

HAMPSTEAD,
May, 1913.

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FATHER STANTON

CHAPTER I

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

THE Stantons of the Thrupp are a well-known Gloucestershire family, and they have dwelt in the neighbourhood of Stroud for the past two hundred years. Strongly political, on the Liberal side, three Stantons have sat in the House of Commons as M.P. for Stroud—William Henry Stanton from 1831 to 1842, Alfred John Stanton from 1874 to 1880, and Walter John Stanton from 1880 to 1885. The first of these was the uncle of Father Stanton, the second the cousin, and the third an elder brother.

Arthur Henry Stanton was born at Upfield Lodge, Stroud, on June 21, 1839. His father, Charles Stanton, a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and later a civil engineer and manufacturer, married Miss Martha Holbrow of Bradbrook House, Stroud. Eleven children—three sons and eight daughters—were the fruit of the marriage. Mr. Charles Stanton, the eldest son, became a barrister after preceding Arthur Stanton at Rugby and Oxford. The second son, Mr. Walter John Stanton, was the M.P. Both have survived their younger brother, the curate of St. Alban's. In

the house where he was born—now the residence of his sister, Miss Emily Stanton—Father Stanton returned to die seventy-three years later, when the long day's work was done, and a memory of the child of five is recalled in a letter written to the Rev. E. F. Russell, January 30, 1913:

'Now I am in the house in which I was born, and old experiences of sixty-eight years ago are renewed; for then at 8.30 the drawing-room door was opened, and nurse appeared and said, "It is time for Master Arthur to go to bed." Master Arthur got up and went out sulkily to the room opposite, the nursery, was put to bed and tucked in. To-day nurse appears at 9.45, at the drawing-room door, and says: "It is time for Father Stanton to go to bed." Father Stanton gets up sleepily, follows nurse to the room opposite, the nursery, gets to bed and is tucked up. So history repeats itself.'

As a boy Arthur Stanton was given to religion, and there was never any doubt as to his vocation. He was always fond of churches—the interest and affection of his boyish years remained till the end of his days—and his preparatory school was at Leonard Stanley, a village some few miles from Stroud, planted at the foot of the Cotswolds—a very old-world village, with Norman church and monastery buildings, long used as barns. In this church of Leonard Stanley, with its decorated chancel and the ancient, high-backed pews of the eighteenth century, undisturbed by 'restorers,' Arthur Stanton worshipped as a child during the early schoolboy days. He went to Rugby at fifteen, older than the average public schoolboy, and was entered in August, 1854, at the Rev. R. B. Mayor's House, 4, Hillmorton Road. Dr. Goulburn, afterwards Dean of Norwich, was

headmaster during Stanton's four years at Rugby, and amongst the assistant-masters were the Revs. E. W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury; G. G. Bradley, later Dean of Westminster; and Berdmore Compton, the first Vicar of All Saints', Margaret Street.

When Stanton went up to Oxford in October, 1858, and became an undergraduate at Trinity College—Cardinal Newman's old college—the religious principles of his long life were already formed. The Rev. M. H. Noel—remembered by many a generation of Oxford Anglicans as the Vicar of St. Barnabas', that very 'ritualistic' church in the mean streets of Jericho—was a contemporary of Stanton's at the University; and Mr. Noel recalls that Stanton as an undergraduate held quite definitely those Catholic beliefs and practices which the successors of the Tractarians, and in especial the clergy of St. Alban's, Holborn, were to popularise so considerably in the Church of England, though not without opposition from those who stuck to the Protestant tradition. Dr. Pusey, the Regius Professor of Hebrew, was still the recognised chief of Oxford High Churchmen in Stanton's time, but revered with awe and affection by the younger men bent on restoring the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and the practice of Confession, he was not often visible in the undergraduate world. Liddon, Dr. Pusey's pupil, then (1859-62) Vice-Principal of St. Edmund Hall, and already the most eloquent of preachers, was the real leader of Anglo-Catholic young Oxford. Liddon was also Master of the 'Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity,' a society formed in the Tractarian days, and his influence was powerful and lasting. 'He [Lid-

don] had been my ideal at Oxford,' Stanton wrote, 'and his influence over me was maintained by my six months' sojourn at Cuddesdon.'

The Oxford of Stanton's years had many other links with the 'Oxford Movement,' the Oxford of a bygone age. Hawkins was still Provost of Oriel; Gladstone was the representative of the University in the House of Commons; Liddell was Dean of Christ Church, and Scott was at Balliol; A. P. Stanley was the Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History; Jowett had recently been appointed Regius Professor of Greek; and Matthew Arnold was Professor of Poetry.

The President of Trinity was old Dr. John Wilson, who had been a Fellow of the college since 1816, and the Dean was F. Meyrick, subsequently one of H.M. School Inspectors—the same Meyrick who ventured forth with a pamphlet on behalf of Kingsley when that redoubtable fighter had been worsted by Newman's 'Apologia.'

The most famous of Stanton's contemporaries at Trinity was a scholar, Mr. James Bryce—a much honoured man whose learning has won the applause of students all the world over, and who, after a Professorship and a place in two Liberal Cabinets, only last year retired from the British Embassy to the United States.

The closest of Stanton's Trinity friends was Henry Thornhill Morgan, who also became a clergyman, and was Vicar of St. Margaret's, Lincoln. The love of H. T. Morgan for his friend, and for St. Alban's, Holborn, never cooled, and only when death took him in July, 1910, was the intercourse broken. Another friendship dating from Oxford days was with the Rev. F. J. Ball, of Pembroke—Provost Ball.

Stanton was not conspicuous either as an athlete or in the examination schools at Oxford. His physical strength was great, and his countenance was beautiful to look upon. (Stanton's good looks were noted by the men of his time at Oxford—he was said to be the handsomest man up at the 'Varsity—just as the old people who remembered him when he first came to St. Alban's often remarked how handsome their curate was!)

Religion, the Gospel of CHRIST, the Sacraments of the Church—upon these things the heart of Arthur Stanton was set, and to these he would be faithful. Having great possessions—health, vigour, money, intelligence, social gifts, the power of speech—he poured them out gladly in the service of GOD and his fellows, and followed his LORD and Master with joy of heart.

The venerable lady who first set up an Anglican Sisterhood in Oxford knew Stanton when he was at Trinity, and at her behest he was always willing to stand as godfather to the many uncared-for and orphaned children whom she brought to be christened.

The four years passed. Stanton contentedly took a Pass degree, and with B.A. after his name, went down for good from Oxford in June, 1862. He was then twenty-three, and would be ordained as soon as possible. The rest of the year was spent at Cuddesdon College reading theology for the Bishop of London's Examination (with Mr. Suckling for a fellow-student) under Edward King, the future Bishop of Lincoln, and working as a layman in the parish which was to be his home for fifty years to come—the parish of St. Alban the Martyr, Holborn. 'I am very rejoiced that you like Stanton,' Liddon wrote to King in November, 1862.

Rugby and Oxford were over. Life's morning march was well begun. Fearless, with

> 'Faith unblenching, Hope unquenching,
> Well-lov'd LORD, and single heart,'

Arthur Stanton came to St. Alban's, to dwell amongst the people in the back-streets of Gray's Inn Lane and Holborn, and to minister to their needs. When the time came for the final passing from St. Alban's and its people,

> 'By contempt of worldly pleasures,
> And by mighty battles done,'

Arthur Stanton had surely earned the rest that belongs to the faithful.

CHAPTER II

AT ST. ALBAN'S, HOLBORN, 1862–1882

THE Rev. A. H. Mackonochie had started the work at St. Alban's, Holborn, in May, 1862, and in June the first services were held in the basement of No. 7, Greville Street.

Stanton arrived in the following December, and has given us some account of the worship in this basement:

'The services of the newly-formed district were carried on in a very "Early Church" manner in a sort of catacomb—*i.e.*, in a kitchen and cellar fitted up very plainly, a picture of which remains here till this day. There was nothing to suggest the magnificence of public worship which has been credited to St. Alban's since. The only light came in from the pavement, and the coal-cellar was the little vestry, not big enough for a cope, and most unsuitable for a lace alb. Our choir efforts were interrupted with "Yah" and "O Jer*u*salem!" shouted down the grating, and our inward recollection often interrupted by the invasion of life in other forms than that which thirsts for the Gospel.'*

It was not till February in the next year that the church in Baldwin's Gardens, built by the munificence of 'a London merchant'—Mr. J. G.

* *The Treasury*, August, 1903.

Hubbard, first Lord Addington—was consecrated on a site given by Lord Leigh.

The parish in those days of old Gray's Inn Lane was a network of courts and alleys, hideously overcrowded, with numerous entirely disreputable common lodging-houses and other places of ill-fame, and a population as savage as it was lawless. Where St. Alban's Church stands—at the west end—a well-known thieves' kitchen existed for many years.

Mackonochie, who had left St. George's-in-the-East to become the first Vicar of St. Alban's, was an altogether remarkable man. His convictions concerning the Holy Eucharist, the confessional, and Church doctrines generally (with the exception of the supremacy of Rome) were those of Catholic Christendom, and at that time were shared by only a handful of people in the Church of England. Yet Mackonochie never had any serious doubt that his faith and practice were the true faith and practice of the Church of England, wherein he was ordained to minister, and whatever happened, he would not be driven out of that Church. His missionary spirit, devotion, and utter indifference to the world's rewards only came to be seen as the years went by. There were preliminary difficulties before St. Alban's was consecrated, and some question of Mackonochie not finally accepting the charge after all. Liddon had early observed Mackonochie's great qualities—they had been fellow-curates together at Wantage—and wrote of him in January, 1863, in the following words to Mr. Hubbard:

'My own instinct would have been to have trusted Mackonochie—I had almost said—against the world. In losing him you lose an apostle. Such men as he is do not abound. They are not

made to order—at least, in Oxford. You will easily get a man who will take his place as far as the services are concerned, and the avoidance of such points as have challenged criticism. But his single-hearted goodness, his sublime indifference to the idols of ninety-nine clergymen out of a hundred, is not to be met with every day.'

Liddon was to become a Canon of St. Paul's, the greatest Anglican preacher of his day, and a prophet in Israel. Mackonochie remained at St. Alban's for twenty years—three-quarters of the time pursued by lawsuits—and then resigned for the sake of peace; and, again resigning from St. Peter's, London Docks, whither his Protestant foes had tracked him, after a brief retirement from the storm and stress, died a solitary death, lost in the snow on his native Scottish hills.

Stanton was drawn to Mackonochie and the missionary enterprise at St. Alban's from the first. The 'single-hearted goodness,' and 'the sublime indifference to the idols of ninety-nine clergymen out of a hundred' noted by Liddon, were bound to impress the untarnished receptive soul of Arthur Stanton at the outset of life. And then Mackonochie was fourteen years older than Stanton, and that difference of years means a profound influence when the younger man is just twenty-three.

Mackonochie had proved his courage at St. George's-in-the-East, where sweaters, public-house keepers, and brothel owners had stirred up a mob of rioters to assail the clergy in the name of 'No Popery!' His religious faith was Stanton's own. The call to St. Alban's was irresistible. Yet Tait, then Bishop of London, warned the young Oxford man, in the summer of 1862, that a curacy under Mackonochie was not the way to the good things of the Established Church. 'If, Stanton, you go

to Mackonochie of St. Alban's, you must never expect any church preferment,' said the Bishop. Stanton's reply to this speech is not recorded, but we know that Bishop Tait prophesied truly. Forty-five years later, at the Holborn Town Hall, Father Stanton reminded us of the Bishop's warning, and said: 'It is perfectly true that one living—only one—has been offered to me, and that came from Chicago. It was a good living. It was a thousand pounds a year, and a house, and all my expenses paid with American generosity. My refusal was on two grounds. First, I said, I was too old, for you cannot transplant a tree when it is of many years' growth; and, secondly, I have made such a mess of it in the Anglican Church that I could not go and make the same trouble in the American Church.'

During his last illness, at the age of seventy-three, Father Stanton was offered the titular honour of a Prebendary's stall in St. Paul's Cathedral by the present Bishop of London, and declined the compliment.

In going to Mackonochie of St. Alban's at the very beginning of his clerical life, Arthur Stanton then deliberately turned his back on the world and its rewards, and, valiant soldier of the Cross that he was, went to a post that promised nothing but obscurity and a lifelong battle in the slums of central London against the forces of evil; and it was with enthusiasm that the post was accepted, as Stanton has told us:

'It had been a remarkable Christmas [1862] for me. Just ordained deacon at the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall, it was the handsel of my clerical career. I had come up from Cuddesdon in December full of enthusiasms and anticipations such as might be expected of a young zealot from

a theological college. Would not London yield to the Gospel if it were preached in the streets? Would it not bring light into the dark lives of myriads? Would not the sweet story bring out the love that must lie somewhere in the hearts of men, and could not I do this? So I dreamed when I saw the lights as I came into the great city. Oh, if it were not that our young men saw visions, hope would die out! Then at once the reality, dirt, squalor, indifference, hatred, misery; and ere the year died out the disillusionment had set in, and now all that is clean knocked out of me. I dream no more.'

(Stanton could say this in 1903—more than forty years after his coming—but there was no loss of faith, hope, and charity, for all the 'disillusionment'; and the enthusiasm for the Gospel and for the welfare—spiritual and temporal—of mankind remained in spite of the dirt, squalor, indifference, hatred, misery. If there were no more 'dreams,' there was ever the vision of the kingdom of GOD, the new Jerusalem, the land that is far off, a vision that was not to be dissolved when the dreams of youth melted.)

If the post at St. Alban's promised only a hard fight and obscurity, obscurity was the one thing not to be granted to this new Church of St. Alban the Martyr and its clergy.

Arthur Henry Stanton was ordained deacon by Bishop Tait in December, 1862, and, in St. Paul's Cathedral, priest in June, 1864. In his own words: 'No sooner was I ordained—while I was a deacon—than my troubles began. A Scripture-reader represented my teaching and action to Dr. Tait, the Bishop of London, and made certain charges which were so absurd in themselves that Dr. Tait told me he could not consider them—

only I was to look out, for they were watching me.' He was henceforth to be continually watched and beset, first by hostile critics—in high places most of these—and later by an ever-increasing army of friends, who loved him with a love that few men are given to receive in this world.

The Scripture-reader's complaint was unimportant, but censure and prohibition came speedily, and Stanton never forgot how his ministry had been rebuked and restricted at the outset, though he bore it all without bitterness and with characteristic good humour. In that same reminiscent speech at Holborn Town Hall in 1907, he said a good deal about the inhibitions and prohibitions laid upon him in the early years of his ministry:

'After I was ordained, two of the Chaplains of a garrison town asked me to preach a mission to the soldiers, which I did. I threw all my heart and soul into the mission, and we had some success. But the dreadful thing about the mission was this, that some few of the soldiers came to Confession and Communion, and, as was reported in a City church, when the Archdeacon asked whether any availed themselves of the privilege of private prayer in the church, which was open for the purpose, the old man said: "Not many; but," he added, "I 'ketched' two at it once"—so it happened at the mission. Those who made their confession were, I suppose, "ketched" at it. At any rate, it was reported to the Chaplain-General, who sent for me and told me that henceforth and for ever I was never to preach again in a garrison chapel.

'Well, I took this very much to heart, for I had put all my soul into the mission. And then for the first time I asked myself: "Am I right in ministering at all in the Established

Church?" Then came to my rescue the kindness, the consideration of my people at St. Alban's, Holborn. It healed the wound, and I went on again.'

And it was always the 'people at St. Alban's,' so dear to his heart, that enabled Stanton to go on again when Bishops frowned upon him. For the Church of England as an 'Established' institution he had neither respect nor regard. Its formularies chilled him. The Prayer-Book, with its dignified ritual, 'sound rule of faith and sober standard of feeling'—beloved of Keble and the Tractarians—made no appeal to Father Stanton. The limitations and restrictions imposed by Anglican authority were irksome to him. With the evangelical fervour of an eighteenth-century Methodist, he combined the sacramental beliefs of a devout Catholic and a reverence and affection for the Blessed Virgin Mary entirely foreign to English Protestantism. The whole position at St. Alban's was a puzzle to the ordinary Church of England man, and Mackonochie, Stanton, and the other clergy attached to the church were consequently, and naturally, suspect. For what is not understood by the average Englishman is always suspected and disliked, so pronounced is our aversion from new ways of thought, and from the labour of trying to understand a new point of view.

Tait and his colleagues on the episcopal bench had no sympathy with Catholic doctrines. Good Protestants themselves—for fifty years ago the rulers of the Church of England were not at all ashamed to call themselves 'Protestant,' and great would have been their astonishment had they been told that their successors would repudiate the term—the ritual

practised and the doctrines taught at St. Alban s seemed altogether out of place in the Church of England. Bishop Tait was far from being an intolerant man, but he was a stout Erastian, satisfied with Presbyterianism in Scotland, and the Book of Common Prayer in England, and anxious to curb all seeming eccentricities in public worship that might endanger the good relations of Church and State, or disturb the existing order of things within the Establishment. As long as St. Alban's was left alone by the outside world, Tait was willing to leave it alone too; but when he was told that British Protestant feeling was outraged by the goings-on at St. Alban's, and that Mackonochie must be put down, Bishop Tait at once hastened to disavow any sympathy with these troublesome clergy of St. Alban's, whose ardour threatened the peace of Israel, and put to shame the slumbering shepherds in a thousand parishes. The lawsuits against Mackonochie for his 'ritualistic practices' lasted fifteen years, only ending with his resignation in 1882, and are ancient history now.

From 1867 to 1886 Mackonochie and a number of clergymen in various parts of England were prosecuted for introducing Catholic ritual at the Holy Communion, and five were imprisoned for disobedience to the decisions of the law courts, while others, under the pressure, resigned their livings or yielded to the storm. In each case the Bishop of the diocese allowed the prosecution, and treated the offending clergyman as a disloyal minister of the Establishment. To-day the doctrines and practices for which these earnest men contended are no longer an offence in the Church of England, and multitudes now enjoy the liberties

of worship won at no small cost by the much-abused 'ritualists' of the Victorian era — the ridiculed and insulted 'ritualists' whom *Punch* and the Press generally derided, and whom Mr. Worldly Wiseman thought contemptible.

No church was so long and so bitterly assailed as was St. Alban's, and Stanton was the most loyal of lieutenants to Mackonochie throughout the years of persecution. Prohibited from conducting missions in garrison chapels, Stanton was not yet prohibited from preaching elsewhere, and in 1869, at the first London 'Twelve-Day Mission,' he went east to the big 'Red Church' of St. Columba in Kingsland Road, to preach the mission in that parish. 'Mother Kate,' of St. Saviour's Priory, Haggerston, has told us in her 'Memories' of that mission how Stanton had a bed made up in the vestry of the church, and slept there so as to be at hand for any poor sinner who needed his help. One morning during the mission, when the preacher was walking along Kingsland Road, a man with a cartload of bricks upset his goods in the middle of the road. A small but interested crowd soon gathered at sight of the disaster, but, as is the custom of a crowd, no one moved a finger to help the unhappy carter replace his bricks. Then Stanton appeared, and the powerful young preacher, whose sermons were drawing all sorts and conditions of folk to St. Columba's, instinctively came to the rescue, and between Stanton and the carter the bricks were replaced. It was quite a small and trivial incident this, but very characteristic of Arthur Stanton in the complete absence of hesitation, of self-conscious shyness and thought as to what onlookers might think, or doubt as to the possible propriety of a Church of England curate picking up bricks in

the Kingsland Road. Doubtless there are plenty of clergymen to-day who would act as simply and naturally as Stanton did under similar circumstances, but forty years ago the proceeding struck people as odd.

Stanton's loyalty and affection for Mackonochie are well known. The latter was a strong, clear-headed, fearless man whose only business was, as he understood it, to preach the Gospel of CHRIST, to minister to the sick and needy, and to celebrate the Sacraments according to Catholic usage—the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist being to him as to Catholics everywhere the Sacrifice of the Mass. That his doctrine was the true doctrine of the Church of England Mackonochie was convinced, and if Bishops and others in high places denied it, they were simply mistaken, and did not represent the Church of England. It was this complete confidence in his position and his exalted spiritual life that were Mackonochie's strength. Humble before GOD, charitable to his fellows, never thinking or saying evil of those who worried him with litigation over rites and ceremonies, conscious of his limitations, the world of art and music absolutely closed to him (and yet the Protestant world spoke of him as 'a sensuous priest who would substitute his æsthetic fancies for the plain Word of GOD'!)—Mackonochie went about his work calmly and quietly, bravely supported by Stanton and two other curates, Doran and Walker, in the early years, and by the Rev. E. F. Russell and the Rev. G. R. Hogg (who are still curates at St. Alban's) in later times.

Mackonochie was not to be put down. Dean Stanley, visiting St. Alban's one Sunday morning at the high celebration of the Holy Communion—it is always called the Mass at St. Alban's, and the

ritual is that of the Roman Catholic Church, only the service is in English—reported to Bishop Tait: 'I saw three men in green, and you will find it difficult to put them down.' Men of faith and goodwill seeking neither preferment nor honours, and counting this world's gain but loss, are not easily put down.

Mackonochie might be silenced under a temporary inhibition, but Stanton would be there to take his place, and the two were at one in their faith and practice. There was never any gospel of doubt, or atmosphere of uncertainty at St. Alban's. The Mass and the confessional were as real to the clergy and their flock as they were to the ordinary Roman Catholic. CHRIST'S Mother was 'Our Lady,' to be honoured with the worship due to her. These things—the Mass, the confessional, and devotion to Our Lady—were not whispered about, or spoken with bated breath, or left as 'open questions,' matters about which Churchpeople might reasonably differ. At St. Alban's they were part and parcel of the Catholic faith, as true as the Gospel, the priceless heritage of the ages. This note of authority in the teaching at St. Alban's, the boldness of conviction not to be shaken by any passing wind of contrary opinion, the sense of being planted on the Rock of Catholic Christendom—despite the unhappy separation from Rome—all made St. Alban's for those who belonged to its congregation so different from the churches of Anglican worship elsewhere. The years of prosecution knit still more closely clergy and people at St. Alban's, and made it seem increasingly a church set apart from the rest of the Church of England. To many it was Stanton even more than Mackonochie who personified St. Alban's, and gave this church its own distinctive

note, its singular character. Certainly Stanton's preaching and ministry spread abroad the fame of St. Alban's as 'a city set on a hill,' and kept the fires of enthusiasm glowing when Mackonochie had been laid to rest.

Mackonochie, ever strenuous and faithful to his beliefs, was in command at St. Alban's during the first twenty years of Stanton's curacy; to him, with his many great qualities, must be assigned the first place in the history of that famous church, for he bore the brunt of the fighting. But it was Arthur Stanton, with his youth, his charm of character, his rare gifts of preaching, his buoyant faith and wonderful love for his fellows, his utter freedom from all professional manner, and his steadfast loyalty to his chief and to their common creed, that made St. Alban's so dear to thousands, and built up the lasting love for the religion learnt within its walls. Mackonochie was revered as a priest of holy life; but Stanton was not only a priest to the people of St. Alban's, he was the friend and 'pal' of all kinds of non-respectable persons who never worshipped in the church, and knew nothing of Catholic doctrines or the mysteries of religion; children of the slums, criminals, and all 'of whom the world was not worthy' had their place in Father Stanton's heart, and counted him their friend.

St. Alban's, banned by high authorities in Church and State, was the natural home for outlaws and rebels. Stanton, frowned upon by Bishops, and seeing Mackonochie condemned by judges, could sympathise with all—more sinned against than sinning—upon whom the law had come down with its heavy hand. And for fifty years that sympathy never failed, nor did the springs of his great love for men run dry; for the

source of that unfailing sympathy, that unquenchable love, was in the depths of his love for his crucified Master, in the sacrifice on Calvary daily before his eyes at every Eucharist he celebrated.

But Stanton's great love for his kind was not the sort of love that burnt up all indignation at injustice. If, on a memorable occasion when the lawyers of the Privy Council had been moved to make one of their many pronouncements against the ritual of St. Alban's, Stanton could astonish the crowded Sunday morning congregation by preaching on the text, 'He giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes,' dwelling on the weather and omitting all reference to the excitement of the hour,* he could at another time, when Mackonochie had been inhibited, burst out with passionate ardour for his much-tried leader in a sermon on the text, 'O man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be with thee: be strong, yea, be strong.'

When at the end of November, 1870, Mackonochie was suspended for three months for ignoring the decisions of the Privy Council as to the manner of celebrating the Holy Communion, Stanton from the pulpit of St. Alban's denounced fiercely the injustice of the whole proceedings in the law courts, the contradictory judgments given in successive cases, the different interpretations of the rubrics by various judges, the uncertainty of the law, and the grossly unequal measures meted out to Socinians and Ritualists by the same authorities. It was the old undying hatred of the

* This calm detachment of Stanton's was perhaps equalled by Mackonochie when, preaching at St. Vedast's, Foster Lane, in Lent, 1876, he declared that the revived interest in religion was proved by people spending large sums of money fighting about it!

world for the truth of CHRIST's Presence in the Blessed Sacrament that was responsible for this injustice, he declared. Then he turned to speak of Mackonochie in memorable words: 'It is the crowning honour of a priest of JESUS CHRIST to suffer for his Master's sake. You will not hear the voice of your beloved priest for three months, but as he sits in his stall, his silence will speak more powerfully than the rarest eloquence. Remember the words of the Psalmist, "I became dumb, and opened not my mouth, for it was Thy doing, O LORD of Hosts." Now are we all here at St. Alban's not only one in faith, but one in suffering also.' And yet the injustice and the insult were not the last word. Stanton bade us not forget that our duty was still to think of those who have done the injury with feelings of kindness and love. They had not understood what they did. A time would come when the mists should have vanished, and all things have become clear, and for that time we must look forward.

Of course, whenever Mackonochie was inhibited or suspended, Stanton always held the fort, and kept the flag flying at St. Alban's, the services being conducted in the accustomed manner. In June, 1875, additional responsibility was imposed upon him. Mackonochie, popularly labelled a law-breaker, was in reality a great stickler for law. His very disobedience to legal monitions came from his sense of the necessity of obedience to whatwere to him the laws of the Catholic Church, and as far as he possibly could, without absolutely breaking these laws, he endeavoured to carry out the commands of the ecclesiastical courts and the Privy Council. But in May, 1875, after eight years of litigation, Mackonochie decided that it was useless to hope for a fair hearing from the

then constituted Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury to that effect: 'The whole history of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council from its first existence makes it impossible to trust its impartiality as constituted for ecclesiastical cases, and my own personal experience has taught me that I have no ground to expect from it either consideration or fairness.'

He added a word of personal and dignified remonstrance to this statement: 'I have been now more than twenty-six years in Sacred Orders. During the whole of that time I have endeavoured to the best of my power to obey the laws of that Church (the Church of England), and minister her offices for the glory of GOD and for the edification of His people. How I may have served in that capacity for the first of these objects it will be for the Great Day to show; as to the latter, it would be a foolish assumption of ignorance not to own that GOD has blessed me. What has been the result? With the very rarest exceptions, I have received not one word of encouragement from my superiors in the Church. I have now been four times dragged before courts. I have stood in court side by side as a fellow-culprit with a clerk charged with adultery. I have found in the highest court of appeal every door for his escape obsequiously held open by his judges, and the one door of justice and equity as vigorously barred by the same hands against me.

'I do not, your Grace, complain, but venture to state facts.'

The answer to this was that on June 13 Mackonochie was suspended for six weeks. Thereupon he went abroad for his holiday, leaving Stanton in charge of St. Alban's.

The trouble in this case was what was known as the Purchas Judgment. Mr. Purchas was a clergyman at Brighton, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London, had declared in 1871 that at Holy Communion he must not wear the vestments, or stand in front of the altar (the Eastward Position), or use wafer bread. (A year before the Court of Arches had said he might do these things!) It was for disobedience to this judgment that Mackonochie had been suspended. At the same time in more than one wealthy and fashionable parish, the ritual for which Mackonochie was condemned was practised without let or hindrance—a fact pointed out by Stanton on the first Sunday of Mackonochie's absence.

Submission to the Purchas Judgment was impossible for those clergy of the Church of England who believed in the Real Presence of CHRIST in the Holy Communion, and were anxious to emphasise and extend that belief. The special vestments at Holy Communion were not so common in Anglican churches in 1875 as they are to-day, but at least a stole or scarf was worn over the surplice, and stole and scarf were both equally illegal according to the Archbishops and judges who had condemned Mackonochie. Stanton wore the vestments as usual on Sunday, June 20, and a day or two later the Bishop of London directed him as curate in charge of the parish to celebrate the Holy Communion according to the Purchas Judgment, wearing no vestment but a surplice, and using plain wheaten bread.

To this decree Stanton replied by fixing the following notice on the church doors:

'N.B.—There will be no celebration of Holy Communion in this church until further notice. All other services as usual.

'A. H. STANTON.

'ST. ALBAN'S CLERGY HOUSE,
'*June* 24, 1875.'

On the following Sunday morning Stanton explained to the congregation of St. Alban's that to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries with the maimed rites enjoined by the Judicial Committee would be an irreverence they, the clergy, could not commit. 'What! would they have him stand at the altar in a common choirboy's surplice?' The only thing to be done was to go across Holborn Viaduct and through Newgate Street to St. Vedast's Church, in Foster Lane—behind the old General Post-Office—where a solemn celebration of Holy Communion with full ritual took place every Sunday at 11.40.

Thither the congregation promptly trooped off to worship as they were wont to do at St. Alban's, Stanton preaching on the text: 'Be ye therefore merciful, even as your Father also is merciful.' Mr. Pelham Dale, the Rector of St. Vedast's, was later sent to prison for his 'ritual,' but his kindness to St. Alban's was never forgotten.

Of course, everybody who wanted 'ritualism' suppressed and St. Alban's 'put down' was extremely angry at what Stanton had done, and inhibitions and prohibitions fell heavily on the curate in charge for his daring. But the St. Alban's people were as determined as were the clergy that there should be no surrender over the celebration of the Eucharist with Catholic rites. Interviews were sought with Tait, who was now Archbishop of Canter-

bury, and with Dr. Jackson, Bishop of London. The latter declined to receive a deputation, and Tait only offered the cold comfort of advising submission to the law. 'Supposing you belonged to the Roman Catholic Church,' said the Archbishop to the deputation of working-men of St. Alban's, 'and you said that you wished to receive the Holy Communion according to the law of the Protestant Church, of course you wouldn't get it.'

It seemed all nonsense to Tait this fuss about what a minister should wear, but since Protestant 'public opinion' was hot against the Ritualists, the Ritualists must give way. But St. Alban's never could be persuaded that it was a Protestant church, for all that the Archbishop might say.

Mackonochie, on his return, fully approved of Stanton's proceedings, and put the matter plainly to Bishop Jackson:

'Some will say, "Well, but surely the consecration of the Sacrament is valid even without a priestly vestment." Yes, my lord. Just as a subject needs only personal soundness to serve truly and loyally his Sovereign, but would be thought hardly respectful if he therefore went in dressing-gown and slippers, instead of Court attire, to the levee.'

To his people Mackonochie said in 1877:

'Ceremonial, purely by itself, is an infinitely small thing; but looked upon as the Divinely-chosen form of worship, in which sense Holy Scripture of both Testaments witness to it, it is great.'

In 1878 the lawsuits were resumed against Mackonochie, and only ceased on his resignation of St. Alban's in 1882.

Stanton referred to the incidents of 1875 at the Holborn Town Hall in 1907:

'Mr. Mackonochie was suspended, and that brought me into direct relations with the Bishop as Vicar and curate, who ordered that nothing should be worn at Divine service over the cassock but the surplice, and we at St. Alban's went to Mass every Sunday at St. Vedast's, Foster Lane. I don't know why it was, but that seemed to be a very wicked thing to do; and the Press made it rather hot for me, because they talked about a wily curate having got round a poor simple Bishop. After that I was continually prohibited or inhibited. The Bishop of London prohibited me from preaching anywhere but at St. Alban's; the Bishop of Gloucester inhibited me; the Bishop of Rochester inhibited me; and the Bishop of Llandaff as well. I remember sitting round a table one day when we at St. Alban's asked ourselves plainly this question: "Can we go on? Is it possible?" And then again the old thing came back—the consideration and the love and the help of the people who supported us; and on we went again.'

And so it was to the end. Always the people of St. Alban's, his friends and neighbours, had the first claim on Father Stanton, and as long as they received his message he would go on, let Bishops and those in high places thunder never so harshly against the curate of St. Alban's.

But Stanton was a warm-hearted man, and felt these censures keenly for all he took them bravely and without faltering. He held himself an alien in the Established Church after 1875; from St. Alban's alone for many years did his influence radiate. A further reference from his speech in 1907 brings out his standpoint: 'Mind you, never

from that moment [June, 1875] have I preached a mission, and never taken a retreat. I never could think again that I should consider myself a prophet in the Anglican Israel. I felt I must keep as quiet as I could, and do all that I could for St. Alban's, Holborn, and that that was to be my ministry. Mind you, I could give a retreat, you know. At the last one I ever took I had sixty old women, and the food was very good, and the weather was very hot, and we were very sleepy; so I made the retreat as lively as I could to keep 'em awake. When it was over a Sister asked one of the old women: "How did you like the Reverend Father's retreat?" "Oh," she said, "it was beautiful; it was better than the 'theayter.'" I tell you that story to show you that it was not from any inability, but I did not wish, after what had been done, in any sense to come forward as a prophet in Israel. I have never stood on a polemical platform since that.'

Father Stanton could crack a joke over his isolated position—he would have gone to the scaffold joking as Blessed Thomas More did if he had been called upon to die for his religion; but the isolation had its bitterness all the same. However, the colder the winds of episcopal displeasure blew upon St. Alban's, the more fervently glowed the fire, and the closer was the fellowship.

It was not all lawsuits and ritual troubles at St. Alban's in those twenty years of Mackonochie's captaincy.

Poverty, sin, disease, crime, and misery in a thousand forms surrounded the church, and against these evil things Mackonochie and Stanton and their fellow-clergy strove continuously. There was scanty public recognition of this work, for the Press was far too busy 'exposing the ritualists' to

find time to report the heroic labours done in the name of love on behalf of health and decency; but in 1868 a significant and solitary article did appear in *Good Words*, then edited by Dr. Norman Macleod. *Good Words* was an excellent magazine in those days, quite definitely Protestant in its religious outlook, but of a good standard in literary matters. The writer of the article—one Richard Rowe—had no sympathies with 'ritualism,' and his 'Afternoon in St. Alban's Parish' is therefore the more remarkable. Mr. Mackonochie had willingly given the writer every facility for inspecting the parish, and Mr. Stanton received the visitor at the clergy house 'with a smile of courteous welcome,' and acted as guide.

The impression made upon this unprejudiced reporter was favourable at once, and it is worth while to quote at length from his article, because it gives both a stranger's portrait of Father Stanton in 1868, and a faithful picture of what life meant in St. Alban's parish forty-five years ago.

Says this writer:

'I soon found that my animated interlocutor was no mere dreamy or *dilettante* admirer of an ecclesiastical past galvanised into seeming spasmodic vitality in the present, but firmly convinced that his form of Christianity was the only one that could get a real practical grip on living men and women—especially on the degraded ones swarming around the clergy house. The basis of Ritualism, he said, was a belief that all human flesh was lovable and venerable, because CHRIST had worn the human form, and therefore the most depraved ought to be looked on and looked after as saintly brethren in obstructed embryo. Confession, this politely but unflinchingly outspoken young priest did not apologise for, but championed as the only

means by which a spiritual director could give individual guidance to his people: "mere preaching was like talking to a flock of sheep." A dread of confession was felt at first, but those who once resorted to it soon thought it an inestimable privilege. Just before Easter and Whitsuntide Communions, it was as much as four priests, sitting all day long at the clergy-house, could do to get through the confessions.

'My "Father Clement" [*i.e.*, Stanton] had a considerable sense of humour. He described with great gusto the response which his appeal to the "unrespectable classes" evoked, when he addressed them as being himself "quite unrespectable," a "sad scamp," who, in ratepayers' estimation had "lost his character ever so long ago"—finishing off with "birds of a feather," etc. He seemed to find more amusement than annoyance in the efforts made by the emissaries of what he called "the Protestant party" to thwart the tenants of the clergy-house in their parochial labours, flocking after them in their visitations to uproot the just-sown wicked tares, openly calling them "Jesuits," and placarding the parish with posters, from whose small type stood out in bloated capitals:

BEWARE!

... ...
... ...
... ...

CREEPING PRIESTS!!

... ...
... ...
... ...

BLEEDING LIES!!!

'Altogether, he was so different from the prim, pompous being a "High-Church parson" is often

supposed to be that I could not help remarking to him how widely he differed from the popular notion. Instead of a dogmatist, as stiff as starch, a somewhat spooney spectre, "walking ever with averted eyes," fixed on its beloved Middle Ages, I had found a genial, quick-witted man of nineteenth-century flesh and blood, able to laugh with all his lungs, and whilst fixedly (however funnily) of opinion that his own theological system is by far the best adapted to the wants of the present, willing (at any rate, in word) to make wide allowance for diversity of views, even to bid God-speed to the worthy City missionary who dogs him on his rounds, under the conscientious conviction that he must be somewhere branded with the mark of the Beast.'

On the offer of Father Stanton the writer set out on a round of visits in the parish, 'visits, of course, on this occasion chiefly friendly instead of spiritual.'

'St. Alban's district was broiling like rancid bacon on the bright May afternoon on which I joined my clerical guide for a parochial ramble. I had half expected to find him still in his cassock, but that was doffed, and he wore the dress, clerical "dog-collar" included, in which Roman Catholic priests usually take their walks abroad. It did not seem, however, to win him much reverence from the Romanists amongst his parishioners. They glanced at him suspiciously, as if they could not exactly make him out — somewhat as young swallows might at a bat zigzagging past their nest; he was very much like the parent bird, but still he was not the real thing. Some of the shop-keepers, too, silently scowled at him, but he made charitable allowance for their hostility. They disliked his views, and even if they were inclined

to come to their parish church on Sunday, the chances were that they might be crowded out of it in the morning by the fashionable folk who flock to its services; "but what can we do?—the seats are free, and the first-comer is first served." The poorer parishioners, too, he said, were but sparsely represented at the forenoon services. "They had their Sunday dinner to cook—an important item in the poor man's economy." A good-natured excuse to be made by one who leads the abstemious life with which, not in Lent only, the inmates of the clergy-house are credited. The great majority of the poor amongst whom we passed, however, were perfectly respectful to their pastor. It is something like calling on a rabbit in a warren to find out the tenant of a particular room in St. Alban's. We had now and then to stop to inquire which of several common stairs was the right one to go up, and in every instance the loungers appeared to answer the "parson's" question with civility—some of them with smiling cheerfulness and welcome. The only thing approaching to a personal insult was a very innocuous one. An exceedingly small boy, not yet promoted to the dignity of breeches, and vague in his notions of ecclesiastical polity, shrilly shouted: "There goes hold S—— o' the Hirish Church!" and then took to his heels as if such caustic satire must necessarily provoke the most vindictive vengeance. My guide certainly merited civility, for nothing could be more courteous than his manner to the poor. There was not the slightest trace of Mrs. Pardiggle-ism in it. He chatted with the old women, and joked with the little ones far more like an eldest son or a big brother than the conventional "proud priest." He took off his hat to bobbing apple-women, and

shook hands with any of his "children" he met in the street, however dirty might be their paws. One of these "children" was a stout young man, labour-stained and perspiring. Another was a grey-haired old man who sold lettuces and water-cress, who, when asked if the fine weather did not spoil his market by making vegetables too plentiful, answered that he "didn't care how cheap green-stuff got, for then the poor could buy the more of it."

* * * * *

'Stumbling up a low, narrow, crooked, wooden staircase, one flight of which had just been scrubbed, but most of the steps of which were very dirty, we reached, at the top of the house, what was far more like a triangular manger than a human habitation. It was simply a corner boarded off from the landing. A patched sack was the only door, and within, in the dark, lay a moaning old woman—a sad drunkard.

'In a somewhat larger and lighted room in another house—larger, but almost filled by a small bedstead, whose posts had been truncated to suit the lowness of the ceiling—a stifling-hot fire was burning. Two tiny earthenware teapots stood upon the hobs. A tea-tray was upon the floor. There were only two chairs in the room. Propped up in one sat a poor creature, wheezing for breath, whose husband had recently stabbed her and broken three of her ribs. The other chair was given up to me as a stranger, whilst the clergyman and the sick woman's sister, who had come to take tea with her (bringing her own teapot), seated themselves on the two ends of the bed. When the pastor spoke gently to the sufferer of the peace to be derived from resigning our wills to that of "the good God," whether for life or death, the

poor creature burst into a flood of tears. The idea of death was awful to her. To soothe her she was told that even the most holy men had thought it a solemn thing to die; but here the sister, accustomed to the often deadly brawls of Holborn courts, struck in, scouting such feeling as cowardly. "Oh, come now, Mr. S——, I don't see that. Do the best you can, you know, and then I don't see as it matters when or how you dies. That's *my* way o' lookin' at it."

'Our next visit was to a bedridden old woman, sitting up in bed in a pretty good-sized room, which, amongst a little other furniture, held a sheet-covered sofa. Her pale face lighted up when she saw who had come in.

'"Yes, indeed, Mr. S——, I'm glad to see you. It's so lonesome lying here without a soul to speak to. Oh yes, the dear lady called, and most kind to me she's been. She's given me stuff for two beautiful bed-gowns, and the money to get 'em made up. Of course I'm glad to see any friends of yours—can't the gentleman find a seat?" So the old soul cheerfully ran on at first, but she soon modulated into a minor key. Her "lodgers," late occupants of the covered sofa, for whom she had done "ever so much," had left "ever so much" in her debt, and she feared that she should lose what she called her "pension" from the parish for bringing such people into it. "However, the Almighty 'll make it up to me where I'm going," she remarked in a tone of somewhat constrained resignation, as if she would have preferred the bird in the hand. Whilst she talked she went on stitching strips of grey squirrel's fur into a child's boa. She had done this work for the same house for I forget how many years, making, when she had paid for her thread, about three farthings on each boa.

'I saw so many poor creatures in bed on that bright and, in the suburbs, balmy afternoon, that I cannot exactly remember the order in which I saw them; but the next, I think, was a little woman literally wasted to skin and bone. She was so pale and pinched, her chin stood up so sharp that, when she ceased to speak, I could scarcely believe that she was not already a corpse. Because she was ill her husband had deserted her—left her to lie alone in a dreary closet, November dim, though the streets blazed in the May sunshine. She spoke hopefully of being able to get into an hospital as soon as she was strong enough to go before a board of gentlemen in Piccadilly; but she looked far more likely to go, let us hope, to Paradise. Ill as she was, she could think of others. The son of a lodger in the same house, who sometimes visited her, was ailing, she thought, and the mother would like to see the priest. This mother was a hearty Yorkshirewoman, seated at tea in a room better furnished than any we had yet visited. A great bedstead, with heavy hangings, stood in one corner, and on a little chiffonier there was a display of glass and crockery, and a tiny fern under a case. The room was very close, but for her children's sake, the good woman said, she could not open the window. The lodger above was a "verra wrathful wummun," and her language was downright awful. For her part, she fain wearied to get back to York. She was diffusely communicative on her domestic concerns. One of her boys was to be taken next day—at least, not to be *taken*, for they'd made him pay three shillings for it—to a school treat at—what was the name of that hill where the young gentleman that got twenty years jobbed his young woman?—that the calves saved, you know, sir?—ah, yes, Buck-

hurst Hill—that was the name. At this point Bill, the boy on whose behalf we had called, came in—a chubby, clean, rosy, neatly dressed little urchin, whose ailment turned out to be nothing more serious than an earache. Bill blushed through bashfulness when his mother informed the priest of his ambition to become a "singing boy," and with delight when the priest took him on his knee and held out hopes of the chorister's cassock and surplice being within Bill's reach. The Yorkshirewoman was one of the faithful. She expatiated on the comparative beauty of the church's appearances on different past festivals, listened delighted to a forecast of the eclipsing splendours it would display on the approaching St. Alban's Day, and proudly showed a little engraving of CHRIST on the Cross, which one of the clergy had given her, and which her husband was going to frame and glaze for her.

'The next good soul we visited was a still Higher Churchwoman, "although," said my guide with some pride, "she came from a Low-Church parish, and at first was most bigotedly opposed to us. I'm going to take you to our West End now," he added with a laugh, as we turned into the quadrangle of the Model Buildings. Although hemmed in by other buildings, they certainly did look refreshingly light and airy after the holes in which we had been burrowing, and the room we entered was not only spotlessly clean, but had even an elegant appearance. Illuminated texts ran round the walls, which bore also a crucifix, Scripture prints, red-crossed devotional bills of some kind, and a "St. Alban's, Holborn, Parochial Almanac." A striped scarf, the gift of one of the ladies, made a pretty cover for a side-table, and on it, in a glass sugar-basin, stood a bouquet

"from Devonshire this morning," the gift of the same kind lady. The occupant of the room, an invalid middle-aged woman, who sat, neatly dressed, upon her bed, said that she had not seen a single violet this spring, and expressed a hope that flowers would be more plentiful this year than they were last. "I know there were not many then," she said, "because I did not get as many as usual from the church." She looked very pleased when her clergyman told her that he had tried hard to find her some cowslips when he was on his last "mission" in the country, and that he meant to try every now and then to get a special hamper of flowers for distribution amongst the parishioners. The conversation turned from cowslips to auricular confession. I listened astonished whilst the good woman talked glibly about the "octave" of this and the "octave" of that, and named a day on which she would feel obliged if the priest would call to confess her.

'We went into another comparatively cheerful scene. In the midst of the dirt and noise of St. Alban's, there is a clean, quiet, little paved quadrangle, bordered by low, old-fashioned little tenements of the almshouse order of architecture. A few children of a tidier class than elsewhere were skipping and trundling their hoops on the hot grey stones; the neat, squat little houses seemed to be nodding in the sunlight. In one of these cottages my guide met with the heartiest welcome he had yet received; but it seemed to be due to his kindness of heart rather than his clerical character. He had been in the habit of visiting there daily whilst the children of the house were ill. "Oh, I *am* glad to see you, Mr. S——," said the mother; "you, as used to come so horfen. I was sorry a'most to see you every day, 'cos *why* you

came; and in course I'm glad my boys is better; but it's lonely like not seeing you now. It's so nice to talk to a gen'l'man as takes a *hinterest* in a party. I likes all our clergies, but I'm used to you, you know, sir."

'One more sample of parishioners' welcome will suffice. At the bottom of a narrow court we had knocked so long at the door of a little cottage, jammed up in a corner, without getting an answer that we were just turning away, under the impression that it must be empty, when the door was opened by an unshorn, lame old man. "Good-day, sir," he said, not looking over-pleased. "My wife's gone to the horsespittle to git my physic; but walk in, and set down." He hobbled before us into a little room, whose air smelt strong enough of tobacco to explain the secret of the old man's crustiness. We had, no doubt, disturbed the poor old fellow whilst he was smoking, and whilst we had been knocking he had been puffing away at his pipe like a locomotive, to finish it before he let us in. The conversation somehow turned on Ascension Day. The lame old man made a most lame attempt to appear interested in an assertion of its equal right with Christmas Day to be kept as a general holiday, and in the announcement that there would be four early communions at St. Alban's on that day, for the convenience of workmen who wished to communicate before proceeding to their work. The epochs of the Christian year had a very faint hold on the old man's mind, save as associated with personal material benefit. If he could have been told that Ascension Day would bring him roast beef and plum-pudding and a pot of beer, his appreciation of its claims to respect would have been marvellously stimulated. His stolidity changed into

attentive listening with droll suddenness when he was informed that henceforth he would be allowed a weekly dole out of the offertory.

'I have kept the visit that struck me most for my last record. At the top of a squalid house lay two smallpox patients, in the same room with a corpse disfigured by the same dreadful disease. I started back with a sick shudder when I ascertained who and what were the occupants of that room; but my companion entered it as calmly, to all appearance, as he had entered any other. Whilst he was in that awful chamber, with the dying and the dead, I stood at an open window on the landing below. At a workshop on the other side of a dirty little yard, in which the sunshine seemed to stagnate, carpenters were whistling music-hall tunes over their planes and up-curling shavings; up the staircase every minute came the filthy, blasphemous language of a knot of sluttish women, squatting on the step of the open door, uttered with as little *malice prepense* as when the decently bred use "the" or "and."'

The round of visits were ended for the writer in *Good Words*. But for Father Stanton and his companions of St. Alban's they went on daily, year in and year out. Changes took place: rookeries were pulled down and blocks of dwellings built. But sickness and misery, and all the shame of 'man's inhumanity to man,' still remained, and still call for the ministry of reconciliation in St. Alban's parish as elsewhere. And throughout the fifty years that cry of the weary and heavy-laden was never left unanswered. Neither can it ever be while St. Alban's stands, and the faith of its ministers endures.

CHAPTER III

AT ST. ALBAN'S, HOLBORN, 1883-1912

THE Rev. R. A. J. Suckling took up the charge of St. Alban's, Holborn, as Vicar of the parish in January, 1883, exchanging his living of St. Peter's, London Docks, with Father Mackonochie, in the hope—a vain one—that the latter might henceforth be left in peace.

It was not an easy thing to do what Father Suckling* did, but it has been well said of Mackonochie's successor that he is 'a man of inspired Christian tact,' and the loyalty of the curates of St. Alban's to their new chief was conspicuous.

When in February, 1908, the people of St. Alban's celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coming of Father Suckling, Canon Newbolt, of St. Paul's, explained something of the situation at that coming:

'The history of Father Suckling's connection with this parish carries us back to a very dark period in the last century in our Churchmanship here in England. His coming here was in consequence of a sort of rift in the clouds at that time, and was the one bright spot in many things that were very dark, and I think the best thing is to forget them. But the difficulties to which he

* All the clergy of St. Alban's are 'Fathers' to their flock, and common recognition has established the title.

succeeded at such a time, we can all of us imagine must have been immense. There were of course the public difficulties at a time when men's minds were charged with every kind of party feeling. He was asked to come here in a most complicated state of things, when Father Mackonochie was gradually being worried to death, prison being the ordinary mode of showing your dislike to another's opinions. All sorts of cross issues were going on, and it was a very complicated state of things indeed into which Father Suckling entered at that time. Added to this, St. Alban's had the faults of its virtues. There were a great many of what we might call private or personal difficulties in stepping into a wonderfully worked parish, and into a parish with such a history as this. It is a difficult thing at all times for a priest to step into a parish where the old machinery is going on. But when he was called to enter such a parish as this, with such clergy under him, to act as Vicar, it was a call of unusual difficulty. I do not suppose that the reign at St. Alban's is anything like an absolute monarchy; but there is a sort of recognition which is claimed, and which anybody must have felt rather difficult, especially in the case of those who were fellow-students with him at Cuddesdon years ago—and such curates! There was the fiery zeal of Father Russell to be repressed; there was the coy, shrinking nature of Father Stanton; and there was Father Hogg to be taught the first elements of liturgical science—all these things to be enterprised by a person who was placed in the position of Vicar.'

A few of Father Suckling's words on that occasion may also well be quoted:

'When the exchange was thought right, we were first of all to have been instituted on the

same day (December 7), but the Bishop of London (Bishop Jackson) thought that the first step should be the resignation of Father Mackonochie, and this accordingly took place on December 1. After his resignation I saw Father Mackonochie very frequently, and many letters passed between us. I cannot find words to express the admiration that I felt for him, his strength and courage, his absolute single-mindedness, as well as for the work he had done in defence of the Church of England. And with the thought of him I must always link the name of Father Stanton, whose help and patient sympathy have never failed me. I cannot resist mentioning here, and with a certain pride, some words of his which have been a great consolation to me to remember. He told me, shortly after my induction, that had I not come to St. Alban's, he himself could not have stayed here. I may therefore claim that my being here has done some good, for it has secured for you his presence.'

There were several other speeches at that meeting, and for us Father Stanton's must be recalled here, not only for its light on Stanton's relations with Father Suckling, but because it was a thoroughly characteristic speech, typical of many speeches made at St. Alban's at various festive and social gatherings:

'I speak, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the clergy of St. Alban's. You have heard of the difficulty—our chairman has told us—that Father Suckling had to face when he came here. He was thrown into the midst of ecclesiastical polemics, and to undertake so strenuous a work, that the incumbent who preceded him was, in most people's opinion, done to death. Yet he came, and, as you know, here he is still. He met the clergy of

St. Alban's. He came and took on the clergy frankly and freely.

'Now, I think that is a very great point, being one of them, because one of the officers of the Church who were in and out with us at that time described us in this way: "Oh," he said, "as to Mr. 'Ogg, 'e's very 'Igh Church; 'e's as 'igh as they make 'em. As for Mr. Russell, 'e is Broad Church; and as for Father Maxwell, 'e's very low." And I said, "Well, but what am I?" "Oh," he says, "you ain't any Church at all."* Now, that was the job-lot that Father Suckling took on. And here we are, three of us still, all four working together. I don't believe there is a parallel in the Diocese of London to this, and, in our dear old homely mother-tongue of Holborn, I think that fact fairly captures the bun.

'Well, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all distinctly to know, for I am sure that I am voicing all your feelings when I say, that the present given to Father Suckling is the expression of our heart. Father Suckling does not need any present at all. It is not his need; he is not broke, and the clergy are not going to shoot the moon. He does not need to have the present, but the need is on our side—we need to give it him. It is the expression of our feeling and goodwill, and we must express it in this way; and we believe it is a way which he himself will appreciate. And here I want just to say something to you who feel that, perhaps, we ought to have given him a personal present. I

* There was another version of this story current at St. Alban's: 'Mr. 'Ogg, he's very 'igh, 'e is: a regular Ritualist, and almost a Roman Cartholic. And Mr. Russell's Broad Church; and Father Maxwell's that Low Church, I call 'im a Protestant. As for Mr. Stanton, sometimes 'e's 'igh, and sometimes 'e's low. I don't reckon him Church at all by rights. He's just a Christian.'

feel with the givers; and, as one who received a gift here, I think that personal presents are at times a little embarrassing. When you gave me those two beautiful pictures six months ago—well, I had to displace others to put them up. And if any of you will go into Father Suckling's room, you will see that there are so many personal gifts that I am afraid he will tumble down and break his crown. We might, perhaps, have got one of those new-made diamonds of which you have heard so much lately. But what would he have done with it? He wouldn't have worn it in his stock or on his finger. He would have put it into a pyx at St. Alban's, or sent it for a chalice to Ascot. And so we have given him the present as it is, that he may use it just as he likes. Now, I do not know that there is anything happier in that sort of way than being able to help and give what we like, out of our own hearts, to objects that we have at heart. I do not think I ever like anything so much as giving to what I love to give to, and I do not think that Father Suckling will ever be more happy than when he has the money to use exactly as he pleases. And all we want is that he should be the happier in the gift, and we are happy with his happiness. I know money is money—*i.e.*, matter—but matter conveys spirit, and with it comes our hearty good wish, our gratitude for all that he has done, and our hope that he will continue with us right on to the very end.'

So, then, Stanton's work at St. Alban's went on and prospered under Father Suckling as it had done under Mackonochie. The ritual at the services in the church was unchanged; folks continued to flock to the confessional, and there were no more lawsuits or prosecutions to disturb the peace of clergy and people in their worship of

God. From time to time the Bishop of London —first Dr. Creighton and then Dr. Winnington-Ingram—required, under pressure of Protestant public opinion, some modification of ceremony, some closer following of the Prayer-Book; and by episcopal command the asperges were given up, the Ten Commandments recited, and incense used more sparingly at the Sunday morning service. But the church was no longer banned, as the years went by, by the Bishop of London, as it had been under Tait and Jackson. Archbishop Tait had justified the refusal of Dr. Jackson to hold a Confirmation in St. Alban's, saying bluffly to the deputation which waited upon him in June, 1875: 'Quite right, too. If he were to go to St. Alban's and mix himself up with your ceremonies, it would be taken as a recognition of them.' Dr. Temple, without 'mixing himself up' with other people's ceremonies, was content to do what seemed to him his duty by St. Alban's, and held a Confirmation there as in other churches. (It was said that Temple, in the Clergy House after the service, spoke in his wonted gruff manner, saying: 'I like your work here, but I don't like your incense,' and that Stanton replied: 'Well, my lord, it's the best we can get at eight shillings a pound.') If St. Alban's came to win some measure of episcopal approval, and was no longer shunned by Bishops as a place unclean, Father Stanton received no favours from high authority. His powers as a preacher increased, and he loomed ever larger at St. Alban's, a living manifestation of the gospel of goodwill, a continual witness to brotherhood and fellowship. He had started the St. Martin's League for postmen in 1877, and, with Dolling helping him for some years, this was at its height in the late 'eighties. Then there was the Brother-

hood of Jesus of Nazareth, and all that it meant—to be noticed later—and Father Stanton's famous 'Mothers' Meeting,' with its annual excursion to Southend or some similar delectable place.

Stanton went to America for a holiday in the summer of 1885, and his annual letter to the St. Martin's League was written from the Rocky Mountains. 'You won't recognise me,' he wrote to his postmen friends; 'real swagger, large-brimmed, white felt hat, with rattlesnake skin round it, flannel shirt laced with twine, leather straps on knees, hair on chin, and knowing twinkle in eye—but I will soon let you know all about it.'

Mackonochie, driven out of St. Peter's, London Docks, by his relentless pursuers, had returned to help in a voluntary capacity at St. Alban's in 1884; and then, on December 15, death took him in the Highland solitudes and snows of Mamore Forest. Father Russell brought the body back to St. Alban's, and vast crowds watched respectfully the funeral procession of Alexander Heriot Mackonochie through the London streets. 'I did not,' said a local tradesman, 'agree with him; but he was a holy man, and did more for London than most of us; so I for one shall put my shutters up.' At Woking, in the St. Alban's burial-ground, Stanton said the last prayers over his dead chief; and committed his friend's body to the dust, and his soul to GOD.

'It is ungracious (Stanton wrote of Mackonochie), and beyond just surmise, to say that the enfeeblement of his manly, strong, loving life was the necessary result of the repeated prosecutions which the Church Association thought it their duty to maintain; but there can be little doubt that underneath the brave cheerfulness with which he met all the reverses, and submitted to the in-

dignities consequent upon them, there lay a very keen sensitiveness, and that the "iron entered his soul." For, although never admitted by him, it was observable; so that no one wondered at the storm-beaten expression on his face, and the broken utterances of his lips, which marked the two declining years of his life.'

In Father Stanton, too, under 'the brave cheerfulness' and joyous faith in GOD and man, 'there lay a very keen sensitiveness.' After more than twenty years had been spent in St. Alban's parish, he was still a suspected and dangerous person in the Established Church, to whom no favour should be shown, and no character given.

Stanton might preach here and there outside St. Alban's, and he did, raising funds by his preaching for the Curates' Fund;* but it was at St. Alban's, and amongst his own people, that his office was fulfilled. With nothing of the recluse about him, always thoroughly alive to what was passing in the world around him, and interested in public affairs and the movements of the times—

* 'When I came here I found, to my amazement, that, with a staff of five or six priests, the whole endowment amounted to only £150. At different times appeals for help were made to the societies and to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but in vain. So long as the patronage of the living was in private hands the Commissioners would do nothing for us, and when the patronage passed out of private hands into the hands of a public body, they could not, they said, afford to do anything. What should I have done, under these circumstances, had it not been for the generous conduct of those who worked with me, some of them contenting themselves with small stipends, and some of them receiving none. And then the Curates' Fund came to the rescue, with Father Stanton as its "deputation," and thanks to his eloquence and your generosity we have been able to maintain our staff intact throughout.'—Rev. R. A. J. Suckling, February, 1908.

a reader of newspapers, and well disposed towards pressmen—Stanton understood that he was of no account in the Established Church, and accepted the situation frankly and without complaint.

In the years of ripe and experienced manhood, and on till the very last year of his life, Stanton was accustomed to preach every Sunday morning at St. Alban's, except in Advent and Lent, when, as in August, he preached on Monday evenings, and on Good Friday he would preach the Three Hours. Of course, the congregation of St. Alban's is not confined, and never was from the first, to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood; it is made up of people from far and wide—many of them, it is true, old parishioners who have removed to a more salubrious district, but who are bound by ties of association and lasting affection to the church where they first heard the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST and learnt the meaning of religion. Old worshippers at St. Alban's may be found in the far corners of the earth—in Australia, Canada, South Africa—and there is generally a picture of Father Stanton to be seen in their homes. For mankind is apt to personify all great causes in some human being, man or woman, and must needs look upon a picture or image of the person honoured and beloved, especially when the conditions of time and space make faith grow cold and hearts grow hard. And the 'great cause' Stanton personified to thousands at St. Alban's was always the same through the years—it was the religion of JESUS CHRIST, involving the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, the love for CHRIST'S Mother, Our Lady, and brotherhood and neighbourliness amongst men, to the utter obliteration of all lines of social caste, rank, and racial difference. That Gospel he preached in season and out of

season at St. Alban's, in that faith he lived and died.

No wonder that the spirit of fraternity brooded over St. Alban's, and the sense of fellowship fell on its worshippers, when for fifty years Arthur Stanton ministered at its altar, preached from its pulpit, and went in and out amongst us as a man amongst men.

Many tokens of the goodwill at St. Alban's—the consciousness of a common cause built up, so largely under Stanton's ministry, by common worship, and by the realisation of a common faith in the things that matter for mankind: things temporal, but, even more, the things eternal—can be recalled by old members of its congregation.

Mr. John D. Sedding, the architect, 'an artist of singular genius, a man of singular strength and beauty and attractiveness of character,' was churchwarden of St. Alban's from 1882 to 1889, and on his death, in 1891, Mr. Selwyn Image described (in the pages of *The Church Reformer*) how his friendship with Sedding came about:

'I remember well the first day I ever spoke to Mr. Sedding. It was many years ago now, at the time when I was in the habit of attending the morning service at St. Alban's, Holborn. One Sunday I was strolling back with a friend along Holborn, when Mr. Sedding came up with us from behind, and, stopping us, held out his hand and said: "Mr. Image" (I do not know how he knew my name), "there is a sort of freemasonry amongst us worshippers at St. Alban's. I have seen you many a time; let us make acquaintance." The action, the manner, the sunny look in his face, the firm grasp of his hand, were all eminently characteristic of the man.'

They were all no less eminently characteristic

of St. Alban's, and quite eminently uncharacteristic of the Church of England generally.

If in social matters St. Alban's had its special atmosphere of good-fellowship, so, too, in its worship there was a feeling that nowhere else in the Church of England did such devotion exist. St. Alban's was the

> '. . . dedicated city,
> Dearly lov'd by GOD on high.'

Here it was, in this most homely of churches, the 'faith of our fathers' had been restored, and was 'living still, in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.' People far removed from old Gray's Inn Lane and Baldwin's Gardens would make a point of getting to St. Alban's at the Annual Festival in June, and would throng the church at Easter and Christmas, and drop in for Stanton's Monday night sermons in Lent and August.

It was Stanton's habit on Sunday mornings to come into church and go direct to the pulpit for the sermon; and then, the sermon over, he would go out, and come in again at the back of the church towards the end of the service, and squeeze in somewhere, unobtrusively, in the men's seats. As people went out, friends and acquaintances could shake his hand, and exchange a few words of greeting. The presence of Arthur Stanton, the smile of recognition, the grasp of the hand—all these things made St. Alban's a place of home for men and women, and gave it a human touch which never jarred on the high and solemn worship of GOD, nor distracted the spirit of devotion. It was GOD's house, this St. Alban's—that was unmistakable; but it was a place consecrated by GOD's love for mankind, and by the love of GOD's ministers for their fellows. It belonged to GOD, St.

Alban's, but it belonged to man also; and here GOD dwelt with man, and was present among men at the Holy Eucharist all the days.

So Father Stanton taught us. And so we believed.

And as the years passed the conviction never waned, for the teaching never failed.

At the altar, in the confessional, in the pulpit, at the back of the church shaking hands with his 'children,' Arthur Stanton was ever one and the same man—'Father Stanton, of St. Alban's.' He might be no prophet in the Israel of the Establishment, but he was the 'Father' of St. Alban's, and countless children grew up to call him 'Dad.' For it was on St. Alban's and its people he lavished the riches of his gifts, and to St. Alban's and its people he gave his strength and his very life. None of the official or respectable High Church societies of the Church of England could claim his services; he never spoke at May meetings, nor appeared on platforms at Church Congresses. He was not 'a prominent figure' at important public gatherings—religious, political, or philanthropic; to the world at large he was but a name, and to the Church of England but a curate of St. Alban's, Holborn. He did sometimes preach for the Guild of St. Matthew and for the Church and Stage Guild in the 'eighties; but both these societies, now no longer in existence, were thoroughly unrespectable. In the 'nineties Father Hogg's Guild of St. Edmund had his cordial support.

So the years went by for Arthur Stanton, and the handsome youth who came down from Oxford and Cuddesdon to serve as deacon under Mackonochie passed from the prime of manhood to old age, without abating one jot of his enthusiasm for

the souls and bodies of men, or faltering in his ministry of the Gospel of CHRIST.

But even after more than forty years as a curate, and an unpaid curate at that, at St. Alban's, Father Stanton was not allowed to continue his ministry without rebuke from those in authority.

One of the periodical 'crises' in the Church of England had been started in 1898 on the old subject of ritual, and the Press had managed to keep it going at intervals, in spite of the South African War, right on till 1904. Then the Conservative Government decided to quiet the 'crisis' down by the good old plan of a Royal Commission on the alleged 'disorders' in the Church of England. For two years the Commissioners, of whose number were the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Davidson), the late Bishop of Oxford (Dr. Paget), and Dr. Gibson (Bishop of Gloucester), were busy collecting evidence concerning ritualistic practices in various churches; and though it was quite outside the particular instructions issued to the Commission, they also reported on certain 'manuals' used by Anglicans at their private devotions.

Now, one of these manuals was 'Catholic Prayers for Church of England People,' sixth edition (twenty-first thousand), 1904, and this book had a commendatory preface by A. H. Stanton, and was generally supposed to have been compiled by him. As a matter of fact, it was compiled by the late E. A. Harris, who was a curate at St. Alban's from 1887 to 1900, and resigned his curacy to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. But Stanton gave his approval to 'Catholic Prayers,' and stated in the preface: 'It is not for a moment maintained that all the prayers are in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer—by the very terms of their issue they

are in addition to it'; and added these words: 'Surely our private devotions are not regulated by the State. *Ubi autem Spiritus Domini ibi libertas.*'

On investigation, the Royal Commissioners found that these 'Catholic Prayers' included *inter alia* the Canon of the Mass in English, the office for the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Litany of Our Lady—the Litany of Loretto in Latin — and the prayer of Pope Leo XIII. to Our Lady for Unity. There was also the instruction that everyone ought to go to their Easter duties—that is, to Confession and Holy Communion at Easter.

The Commissioners were horrified that such a book of devotion should be issued by a Church of England curate, and declared in their Report published in June, 1906: 'We have difficulty in understanding how the author of "Catholic Prayers for Church of England People"—described by the present Bishop of London (Dr. A. F. Winnington-Ingram) as "a thoroughly disloyal work"—has been allowed to hold a licence in the Diocese of London under successive Bishops without being required to withdraw the book from circulation.'

At once the newspaper men came buzzing round St. Alban's wanting to know what Father Stanton was going to do about it all. As to the Report, it seemed to Stanton that the matters reported on were very trivial by the side of the open attack on the fundamentals of the Christian Faith by Modernists, and Rationalists, and 'New Theologians.' He refused to make a pronouncement in the press, on the ground that he was 'only a curate,' but at St. Alban's, on July 8, he spoke out:

'This controversy about the details of public worship sinks into insignificance before the de-

structive criticism which attacks our common Christianity. I cannot hear the chatter as I listen to the enemy thundering at the gates of our citadel. If the Old Testament is given up, and the Gospel of St. John (said not to be his at all), and the Synoptic Gospels are almost all of them untrustworthy, then we all, Catholics and Protestants, fall with them. The Catholic priest must pull down his altar and discard his chasuble, and the Protestant minister destroy his pulpit and pull off his gown, for the ground is cut away from under the feet of both of us, and we have been teaching as the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST the invention of man, and—GOD help us all.'

A year later, at the great meeting held in Holborn Town Hall, Stanton, in his speech, referred to the personal allusion in the Report:

'Well, then, the next trouble that came upon me, when I thought everything was going on all right, when everybody was kind to me, and all you people came to my Monday evening services—there is one thing I hope you will never forget: there is nothing so inspiring to a man as to meet his fellow-men in this way—everything was going well, till one evening when I was taking a class, I was told a reporter wanted to see me. I went down, and he said: "Have you heard about the Royal Commission?" I said: "Well, I have heard about it, but I don't care anything about it." Then three more came, and I began to get a little irritated. One shouted up: "Well, but supposing they turn you out of the Church, what are you going to do?" And then I *did* shout down: "Sell cat's-meat."

'Well, of course, as you know, the Bishop of London sent for me. He was exceedingly kind. It never entered into his head for one moment to

take away my licence, and he knew perfectly well that, as far as I was concerned, he might throw me out to fill the maw of the Protestant wolf, rather than that he should be torn to pieces. He would not think of it for a moment. But he asked me to withdraw my name from the preface of the little book, "Catholic Prayers," which, it seems, had brought me into trouble. Of course, I consented. But I did say this to him: "You may think 'Catholic Prayers' disloyal to the principles of the Reformation and to the Advertisements of Elizabeth, but this I will say to you about the book: there is not one single word in it against the inspiration of the Word of GOD; there is not one word in it against the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; there is not one word in it against the atonement of our Blessed LORD and SAVIOUR on the Cross, or His Resurrection; nor is there one word in it against the Sacraments and the Saints."

'But, of course, I could not help feeling it sometimes. As the shadows of life begin to gather round me, I ask myself, as every man in my place would ask himself: "Well, now, *am* I right? Why should I be right and the others wrong?" There are always moments when a man asks himself those questions when he has passed through vicissitudes like those I have named, and been inhibited over and over again. And so it is that a meeting like this is an assurance which I shall carry with me to my very end.'

The meeting whereat these words were said was got up in the first place by Sir John Buchanan-Riddell, and other men who attended Stanton's Monday night services, and the chief arrangements were made by the Rev. E. F. Russell and Mr. F. E. Sidney. It was held in the Holborn Town Hall,

on June 26, 1907, under the chairmanship of Mr. George W. E. Russell, and it took the form of a resolute and unmistakable answer to the uncomplimentary opinions of the Royal Commission. A chalice and paten, and two pictures—one of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the other of the altar at St. Alban's—were presented to Father Stanton, with the following address, signed by 3,600 men:

'DEAR FATHER STANTON,

'The signatures which follow this are the names of some only of a large body of men who count themselves deeply indebted to you for your teaching and influence at St. Alban's, Holborn, in particular, but also in many other churches.

'For some time there has been an impression amongst us that you could only imperfectly know how singularly helpful these services have been to us. Year after year we have listened to and profited by your words, and our appreciation and gratitude for them has grown until we can no longer keep silence, but, simply for our own relief, must tell you, in the simplest and most direct way we can, just what we feel. Your labour of love on our behalf has not been a wasted labour; it has done great good to many people, in particular to many men, who thank GOD for having given them the opportunity of knowing you. It has been not only the charm of your speech which has drawn us to you, but—what is, of course, of far higher value—the depth and reality of your religious teaching, your devotion to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and your conspicuous ability to enter with sympathy into our thoughts and needs, and into all that which at this time makes faith and life difficult for men.

'We do not forget that there are women, in numbers not less than our own, who share our gratitude to you, and who would like, if opportunity were given, to express that gratitude; but it seems to us that your message has been pre-eminently a message to men, and has proved itself pre-eminently serviceable to men.* For this reason we have kept this expression of appreciation and thanks to the men only who have profited by your ministry.

'Accept, dear Father Stanton, the heartfelt gratitude and prayers of us all, of those of us whom you know personally, and of many more whom you can never know; and believe us to remain,

'Your greatly obliged and
'affectionate friends.'

The meeting, with its wonderful enthusiasm, brought out not only the depth of affection felt

* The men of St. Alban's always maintained that Stanton was 'pre-eminently' their minister. It was a tradition of the place. Provost Ball, one of Stanton's oldest friends, has this note on the matter in the *Treasury*, May, 1913: 'He was not a boy's priest; those who sought him, and fell under his influence, were chiefly youths just entering on the battle of life, or young men already in the thick of it. Older men were sometimes drawn to him. But no matter what their social grade it was the *young* who attracted his sympathy most, and who in turn were attracted. Towards women his attitude was that of a chivalrous gentleman; he valued their friendship, and reverenced the excellencies they showed, but it must be confessed that he was entirely and genuinely untouched by the supposed charm of "Pretty Fanny's ways." Sensible women did not mind this indifference, which was evidently no pose, but the less rational would sometimes resent it, and with bitterness.' But Stanton had the warmest appreciation of the help given to St. Martin's League by many ladies who acted as superintendents of the postmen's houses, subscribed to the funds of the League, sang at its concerts, and generally were heart and soul in the work.

for Stanton, but the wide appeal his ministry had made.

Father Suckling, as Vicar of St. Alban's and as Stanton's friend, declared that chief amongst the parishes that were 'indebted to Father Stanton for his broadcast sowing of the seed of the Gospel was St. Alban's, Holborn,' and added a personal tribute: 'I have known him—I have been trying to think back—and I fancy the first time I met him was in 1860. That is a long time. But there are three things which, according to an American writer, would really make the knowledge of a person worth having. They are these: First, says this American writer, "Have you travelled with that individual?" I have. Second, "Have you lived with him?" And I answer, "I have." The third, says this writer, is the most important, because it is very often a test by which many persons fall, and that is: "Have you had any money transactions with him?" And to this also I answer, "I have." Now, having been in those three positions, I want to bear my unhesitating testimony, and say how fully in accord I am with this splendid meeting in trying to do the utmost honour to him. We cannot do too much.'

Mr. George W. E. Russell mentioned that, as a Harrow boy in 1871, he had of his own free choice, and without any intervention or advice, placed himself, while still a schoolboy, under the spiritual guidance of Father Stanton.

Two well-known Nonconformist ministers—the Rev. C. Sylvester Horne, M.P., and the Rev. F. C. Spurr (of Maze Pond Baptist Church)—contributed their testimonies to Father Stanton's ministry. The former wrote: 'I signed the Address to Father

Stanton with the greatest pleasure, in token of my appreciation of his social work.' Mr. Spurr, who is now in Australia, spoke, "first of all, as a personal friend of Father Stanton; and, secondly, as the mouthpiece of a large number of intelligent Nonconformists who have signed the Address to Father Stanton, and who admire with the greatest admiration his magnificent evangelical teaching, and the splendid social work that he has accomplished for the last thirty years.' Mr. Spurr went on to speak of Father Stanton's influence as a preacher and as a man: 'My lips are sealed as to names, but some who are tied to me by very close bonds, and who were once outside all religious influences, drifting into scepticism and worse, have been brought through that man's Monday sermons at St. Alban's to a humble faith in JESUS CHRIST, a faith of the intellect, a faith of the heart, and of the practical life. . . . GOD has put a great love into his heart, and it seems to me that that is the secret of his magnetic and marvellous personality, through which GOD has accomplished so much during these forty years. Father Stanton appears to me to be a perennial. . . . He will remain a young man to the end; and when GOD has finished with him here, and he passes beyond the veil, he will be like all GOD'S servants yonder—a young man.'

Mr. William Richards, an old member of the Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth, a workman, born in St. Alban's parish, and educated in St. Alban's schools, added his word to the chorus of goodwill. 'Father Stanton told some of us one Sunday afternoon,' said Mr. Richards in the course of his speech, 'that he was travelling on a certain railway, in a third-class carriage—as I believe he always does, unless he can get into the guard's

van—and one of the railway employees got into the same carriage. The Father, in his usual way, "palled" on to this chap, and they got talking. The railwayman told Father Stanton of the large number of hours he worked, and the smallness of his pay; and the Father said: "Well, now, don't you think it's a shame that a good many men receive from the company for which you work a very much larger sum in the shape of dividends on their investments, for which they do nothing, than you receive as wages after working the very long hours you do work in the week?" That is a point which seems to call for a word of appreciation from me as a workman.'

Much of what Father Stanton said on that memorable night has already been quoted, and the conclusion of his speech revealed something of the secret of his life.

'This is a remarkable meeting, and you must account for it. There you are come together; and here am I—nothing but a miserable curate. Why should you come? I have not "kidded" you. What is it? I will tell you what it is.

'Don't make any mistake. Why are you here like this, to do me this honour and to show your love for me? It is because GOD has given me something better than emolument, and far better than position. GOD has given to me, blessed be His Holy Name, the love of my fellow-men. And *amor vincit omnia*—love conquers everything—and the one verse in GOD's Holy Word that I pick out, which I should like to be written over my grave, is this: "GOD hath made of one blood all nations of men." Those words lie at the bottom of all credal and social difficulties and differences to unite all men together. It is blood and heart that make men one; for love ever, as you can see

it to-night, is reciprocal, and the words I should like to end with are Lowell's—

" He's true to GOD who's true to man ; wherever wrong is done,
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us ; and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.

" GOD works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain-range or sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye will,
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps one electric thrill.'

'So I end with the words of St. Paul, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians: " Therefore, my brethren " (do not forget the *my*) " dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, so stand fast in the LORD, my dearly beloved." '

This meeting was the vindication of Father Stanton by the multitude whom he had taught and inspired, and for whom he had laboured in the ministry, against the gainsaying of Royal Commissioners.

Only a little more than five years of active work remained, and in those five years the full round of sermons was preached. Episcopal displeasure could still manifest itself, for even in 1912 the Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. Chavasse) declined to allow Stanton to preach in his diocese, though as far as London was concerned all was peace. But the disapproval of Bishops was a small matter to Stanton now. He was conscious of his length of years, despite all his buoyancy of spirit, and talked of ' slowing into the terminus.'

'I once remarked to him (we were nearly of the same age) that one sometimes wondered why young people did not care for our company as much as at one time they seemed to,' wrote Provost Ball,* 'and then the recollection came to one, *we are getting old*, and the old are seldom attractive to the young. With almost passionate grief he exclaimed, "Oh, how bitterly I feel that myself!" Of late he had more than once spoken in confidence to me (and I suppose to others) of the way in which he felt that his powers and energies were wearing out. "I do not know how long I can stand it," he said. "I shall at all events stay on at St. Alban's as long as Suckling wants me, but if anything takes place that shows I am no longer of any special use to him, I shall probably go down to my sister's at Stroud, and remain there quietly till I shall see what my best course for the future will be."'

Illness fell upon Father Stanton early in 1912, but he got the better of this, and after a short visit to Stroud came back to preach his usual course of Lenten sermons at St. Alban's.

On November 24, 1912, Father Stanton preached his last sermon at St. Alban's, Holborn, from the text, 'He said unto them, How is that ye do not understand?' It was a sermon on the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes—the feeding of the five thousand—just an average sermon, such as Stanton had preached at St. Alban's any time in the years that were spent. But because it was the final utterance from the pulpit of St. Alban's, Holborn, of the preacher who for fifty years, through good report and ill, had set forth the Gospel of CHRIST with a plainness of speech and a flame of enthusiasm that drew multitudes to listen, and kindled

* *Treasury*, May, 1913.

faith and love in their hearts, the words spoken on that Sunday morning are cherished in the memory, and are graved on the recollection.

A few sentences from that farewell sermon* stand out:

'We lose so much because we do not remember the things that are past, how that GOD has ever been mindful of us. He will bless us.'

'I know that GOD has held you up ever since you were born, and your praise should be always of Him—He who gave you your breath, and gives you the breath you breathe at this moment. Look back into the past, and just remember how faithful and true GOD has been to you all your life.'

'Very often things seem very difficult indeed; but we forget this—the Providence of GOD over all things.'

'Our LORD made the situation all round about us. He has placed us under the circumstances in which we live, and we had better make the very best of it. It's no good saying we can do nothing, and dropping feeble hands beside us.'

'"Make the men sit down." Get to work; do the good you can. You did not make the situation, but you are placed in it. Thank GOD, then, and do all the good you can.'

'They took care of the broken pieces. Don't let any of the fragments be wasted. We lose so much because we waste it.'

'Perhaps something is said in the sermon you might remember. Do not forget it. Treasure it up and keep it.'

'Perhaps there is some verse of a hymn which touched you, and the warmth of soul came over your whole being. Well, do not forget it! Look

* The sermon was printed in full in the *British Weekly*, and in St. Alban's Monthly Paper.

it out. Keep it. It will come in some day when the shadows begin to fall around you, and you begin to hear the murmurings of the river beyond, and your eyes grow dim and you cannot see.'

'Treasure up the fragments: the text you love, the hymn you love, the memory of some visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Do not let anything be lost.'

'In keeping God's commandments there is great reward, and they that bless are blessed; and they that give, give more; and they that are kind, are kind again; and they that help, help again. They that bless are always blessing, and they that are blessing are blessed of GOD. Oh, how is it that we do not understand?'

Surely for Arthur Stanton on that day when the shadows began to fall, and the murmurings of the river beyond began to be heard, and the eyes grew dim to the fleeting vision of this world, was there a treasury of unwasted fragments. And he, whose life had been a life of blessing, was, living and dying, blessed of GOD and of man; and he who had given, and given again, and helped, and helped again, did understand in that day that in keeping GOD'S commandments there is veritably great reward, and they that bless are blessed.

On that same Sunday morning, November 24, 1912, Father Stanton celebrated the Holy Communion at eight o'clock for the last time at St. Alban's.

CHAPTER IV

THE PREACHER

STANTON preached his first sermon, at Mackonochie's request, in the basement of the Greville Street Chapel, in the last Sunday of the year 1862. The place was small, not more than fifty would it hold, and the preacher had only been ordained deacon a few weeks earlier. It was a trying ordeal, as Stanton has told us: 'I remember feeling the same creepy sensation I used to at Rugby when Dr. Bradley, my tutor, afterwards Dean of Westminster, put me on to translate a portion of a Greek play, with which my acquaintance was of the thinnest description.' But he counted on a sympathetic audience, and was not disappointed, as far as his hearers were concerned. Writing forty-two years later in the *Treasury*, Stanton recalled the text—'the subject of the sermon I forget'—and noted that 'it was the passage that the aged Bishop Fisher found when he opened his New Testament on the way to execution, a tragedy of our history that had at that time fixed itself upon my mind. It was John xvii. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom Thou has sent."' (The martyrdom of Blessed John Fisher under Henry VIII. was to Stanton a standing witness against 'establishment' and the tyranny of the State over the Church.)

Referring to this first sermon, the preacher did 'not remember any discomfiture in the delivery,' in spite of the nervousness in anticipation.

'Father Mackonochie made a few criticisms, adding some very kind remarks, and showed his appreciation of my efforts by very soon asking me to preach again. After this I took my regular turn with the others, and, perhaps, had rather more than my natural share of preaching.'

The manuscript of the first sermon was kept in the pocket unused, and very soon after manuscript was dropped altogether, and Stanton preached extempore for the rest of his life.

When Bishop Wilberforce went to St. Alban's one Sunday morning, February, 1866, to see what it was like, he heard Stanton preach, and commented on it in his diary: 'Stanton preached an earnest, useful, practical sermon on fasting: its duties, uses, difficulties, and temptations—thoroughly evangelical, but rather an imitation of Liddon.'

This idea of 'an imitation of Liddon' struck Stanton as most extraordinary. But others, besides Wilberforce, observed it who were at St. Alban's fifty years ago. Of course, the imitation was entirely unconscious, and perhaps to those who have only heard Father Stanton preach in the last twenty years the notion is as absurd as it was to Stanton himself.

But the 'thoroughly evangelical' note of the preaching which struck Wilberforce no one would deny. It was sounded all the time. That love for the Bible, which comes of knowing what it contains and is kept alive by close and intimate study of the sacred Scriptures—for with most of us only when we leave off reading the Bible do we cease to care for it, and the same thing is true, of

course, of the writings of many profane authors—was a great factor in Stanton's ministerial life, and mightily affected his preaching. The 'music of the Gospel' was ever leading him home, and he must needs bring all who would give ear within sound of the brave song.

It was this love for the Bible, with the Evangelicalism that dwelt so constantly on the *personal* SAVIOUR, that endeared Stanton's preaching to many old-fashioned, earnest-minded Protestants, both Nonconformist and Church of England, whom the 'higher' criticism and the 'new theology,' and the general incursion of rationalist modernism, had driven from their accustomed places of worship.

At the Watch Night Service on New Year's Eve, and on the Monday evenings in Advent, Lent, and August, multitudes came to hear Stanton preach who never went to St. Alban's at any other time. On the Sunday morning Stanton's sermon was given in the middle of the solemn ritual of High Mass, but on the Monday nights the preacher had the service to himself, and, as an indignant High Churchman once complained, 'the service and sermon were more suitable for a Methodist chapel than for the Church of England.' As another indignant remonstrant was of opinion, after hearing Stanton preach on a Monday in August, at the time of the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, that the preacher, if he were an honest man, would join the Church of Rome, Stanton, not displeased, decided that his ministry was many-sided. He read out both letters from the pulpit the following Monday night after they were received.

The clear, shining sincerity of the preacher, his vitality—Father Stanton even in old age was so

much alive—his great dramatic gifts, and his deep understanding of the people he was addressing, an understanding rooted in the intense sympathy for his fellows — all these things must be taken into account. Father Stanton had personality, and distinction of character in the pulpit as elsewhere. We who heard him were conscious of it, and our hearts went out to his, for the appeal was irresistible. It was no high-flown rhetoric this appeal, neither was it oratory or eloquence as these accomplishments are commonly understood. The very simplicity of speech had much to do with its charm and its power. It was but one man talking to another, only the man who spoke was a man of GOD, and that made all the difference.

The casual visitor to St. Alban's might think a sermon of Stanton's was made up on the spot, so free was it, apparently, of all laboured preparation. In reality the preparation for each sermon was considerable. Could any man preach every week for fifty years in the same church without making careful preparation, or boring his congregation? Both the text and the occasion required thought. Favourite writers were consulted, and verses, often from familiar hymns, looked up. (But when the time came for preaching the sermon the probability was the verse would not be quoted with literal accuracy.) Spurgeon was one of the writers for whom Stanton had a great fondness, and the sermons of that famous Baptist preacher were studied with an interest that never flagged. Dolling used to say that one could always tell when Stanton had been reading Spurgeon, but in latter years it would have been hard to say when Spurgeon had not been read.

The Watch Night Service at St. Alban's, which Stanton always conducted, was started on New

Year's Eve, 1863. Neither Mackonochie nor the regular church-goers desired it. There is no authority for such a service in the Book of Common Prayer, and no precedent in Catholic tradition. In fact, they had all gone to bed as usual at the clergy house in Brooke Street on the first New Year's Eve after the church was consecrated.

But the people of the courts and alleys round St. Alban's wanted a service. It was understood to bring good luck, and belief was strong that no blessing could be expected from GOD in the coming year unless the old year had been seen out in church. So there was much ringing of the clergy house bell, and much shouting at the door for a service, as the time drew on towards midnight. Stanton got up, and Mackonochie assenting, went down and opened the church, and the people streamed in until the place was filled to the doors. And every New Year's Eve after that the service, entirely unadvertised, has taken place, the church always packed with a congregation that is not seen at other times in St. Alban's. Of course, Stanton had a host of stories about this Watch Night Service of his.

'On one memorable occasion—it was when New Year's Eve occurred on a Saturday night, which here is always an alcoholic, noisy night—just after I began my discourse, a woman astraddle on the rim of two seats adjured me in a loud voice to come down, saying: "You ain't no priest; come out of it!" To which several of my rough lads answered: "You let the genelman alone, or we'll knock you silly!" Mr. Russell came to the rescue, and led the "lady" out; but she, in departing, poured out upon him a thick vocabulary which could be heard when he got her outside, and died

away in the distance, but such as may be only described, not repeated.'

On that same night, 'being rather disconcerted,' Stanton proposed the singing of a hymn, and came down to give it out, 'at which a tall man, making me a profound bow of reverence, fell on his head, and I had to raise him again to an upright position.'

Then, on another New Year's Eve, after the service was over, a poor woman put a sixpence into Stanton's hand, saying: 'Father, you must be dry; get yourself a drink.' 'Of course, I took it,' said Stanton, 'and I put it into the alms-box, for I knew she had had quite enough that night.'

The wildness lessened at Stanton's Watch Night Service—it was always peculiarly 'his service'—with the changes in the neighbourhood and under the steady influence of St. Alban's and elementary education; but the poor and the outcast, the felon and the drunkard, still remained to throng the church at the passing of the year.

It was at one of the later Watch Nights when Stanton, having asked everybody in the church to kneel down for a general confession of sins, heard the mother of a tall, lanky boy, who was standing up, adjure her son very audibly with: 'Go down on your knockers, Jim, and go in for it, can't yer? He's a very good genelman.' The preacher accepted it as 'a very great compliment' when someone remarked aloud at the end of his address, 'Can't he chuck it orf 'is chest!'

It was on the last night of 1908 that Stanton spoke of the brighter days coming for the aged poor, and how much the Old Age Pensions would mean for them; and at this there were some shouts of 'Hear, hear,' and clapping of hands.

'It is a sort of tie to us, at any rate, this service,'

Stanton wrote in answer to the question, 'What good in this service?' 'For afterwards, when any help is wanted, the plea, "We were at your service on New Year's Eve" is often urged.' But what it all meant he never professed to understand There was an incident, Stanton related, of the solitary worshipper, only explicable on the understanding that the New Year must come in with prayer of some sort if GOD's blessing is to be expected: 'I was locking up the church on one occasion, and had just turned the key, when I heard steps pattering up Brooke Street. It was a lad of about twenty. "Is it all over, Father?" "Well, yes," I said, "it's past one o'clock!" "Let us go in for a minute." So I opened the door and let him in, and he remained in the dark church about five minutes; then he came out with, "It's all right, thank you, Father. 'Appy New Year." What he did, or said, or thought GOD only knows; but I always think about our people that with GOD a little goes a long way, and that He reads it right who knows all the circumstances—at least, so I comfort myself.'

'GOD knows' that was enough for Father Stanton. 'He reads it right who knows all the circumstances.'

> 'In the ending of the year
> Light and life to man appear.'

So the old carol went that we heard at St. Alban's every Christmas-time. Stanton's Watch Night Service brought light and life to many, and we can only leave it at that.

A visitor to St. Alban's on December 31, 1872, left an impression of the service which may be given here, though it has often appeared elsewhere:

'Precisely at half-past eleven Father Stanton mounted the pulpit, and requested the congregation to follow him in the first hymn, after he had sung it to them, which he did in a not very musical solo; but the chorus was very effective. It was as follows:

"Shall we meet beyond the river,
Where the surges cease to roll?
Where, in all the bright 'for ever,'
Sorrow ne'er shall press the soul?
Shall we meet? shall we meet?
Shall we meet? shall we meet?
Shall we meet beyond the river,
Where the surges cease to roll?"

'After the hymn Mr. Stanton read a single verse from Ps. xxvii.: "I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living"—and delivered a brief address on the duty of recognising the goodness of GOD while in "the land of the living." The problem started by the preacher was: "How is it, if GOD be good, that anybody has a chance of going to hell?" In solving this problem by the answer of Free Will, this Ritualistic preacher outpreached any Wesleyan in the great metropolis. Matter, manner, and energy were of the very essence of the conventicle; and the congregation, which was essentially a poor one, literally hung upon his lips as he contrasted GOD'S goodness with man's misrepresentations of Him. Lest men should only fear GOD, he turned their attention to the story of the Incarnation—GOD at Christmastide, cradled at Bethlehem, the very revelation of love. "Do not say you must be damned, dear friends," he concluded; "do not harbour the black sin of despair. It is a lie. Say, 'O GOD, Thou art my GOD.' If a fellow only hates sin

because he thinks it will pitchfork him into hell, that is not repentance. Love GOD as perfect goodness; then you will see all with a new light. Then you will be truly penitent, as frosts melt and flowers spring up when the sun shines."

'A long, silent prayer ensued as the church chimes rang in the New Year, followed by an extempore prayer by the minister, after which, "Guide us, O Thou Great Jehovah," was sung. At the last verse, "Come, LORD JESUS, take Thy waiting people home," Mr. Stanton desired us all to "sing out loud," and I can answer for it that every man, woman, and child followed his injunction. He then concluded his address. "Go either to church or chapel. I know many reasons why you may not like church. But, at all events, put yourselves on the side of GOD. Be on the side of the good, good GOD."'

So the service ended, and every New Year's Eve a similar service was conducted, and a similar sermon preached—for Stanton never minded repeating himself—and St. Alban's was always crowded.

It was a very different congregation—from this Watch Night gathering—the Sunday morning congregation at St. Alban's. But it was the same message for all that Stanton had to deliver, for GOD had made of one blood all nations of men. If the poor and illiterate came on New Year's Eve, persons of substance and of fine intelligence were at St. Alban's on Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock, and all were sinners, with hearts that needed comforting. 'It is a great bond between all of us,' Stanton pointed out in one of his sermons, 'that we are fellow-sinners. Whether we are Church of England, Nonconformist, or Roman Catholic, we are all fellow-sinners.'

And to be a sinner was to know the need of salvation. Only the Pharisee, self-justified, could provoke the scorn of CHRIST, and of His servant Arthur Stanton. And Pharisees, when they went to church, always went in sight of men on Sunday mornings.

The Pharisees were like the barren fig-tree, Stanton said, they only produced leaves: 'they offer prayer without praying; they sing hymns without giving praise; they have opinions without faith. You may hold all the opinions in Christendom, and yet never lay hold of eternal life.'

Knowledge of theology was not enough to save a man, said Stanton; there must be love and faith as well as knowledge. And then followed these solemn words: 'Remember, the better you know CHRIST, the better you are able to crucify Him.'

Parts of a sermon preached by Father Stanton, on Sunday, February 2 (Candlemas), 1873, were taken down by the visitor who reported the previous Watch Night Service, and have been preserved these forty years. The text was, 'The LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple.'

'In the Temple,' said the preacher, 'how simple was the scene! An old man takes the Child, and a thrill of joy passes through his heart. He had waited for the consolation of Israel. He speaks a few words, and then a woman stricken in years comes in. She utters her prophecy. She recognises the LORD of Lords in the Child. The offering is made, the purification is over, and they leave. Night closes, and the Temple doors are shut. The LORD *had* suddenly come to His Temple. He for whom they yearned had appeared. GOD and man had met.

'Simeon had been promised that he should see

the LORD'S CHRIST. He waited patiently, "full of the HOLY GHOST," and at last the LORD suddenly came to His Temple. Simeon *did* depart in peace. So, too, Anna; she had long fasted and prayed. Day and night she had waited for the consolation. It had not come, but day after day, night after night, she went on; still fasted, still prayed. Then in eternity, time struck the hour, and JESUS CHRIST came. She had not waited in vain, and henceforth she could talk of nothing else to those others who were waiting too.

'And have you not felt this? You groan and pray to see GOD; to press Him to your heart and feel Him yours. You want to grasp what is behind all your prayers, communions, confessions. You want religion to be a personal affection for CHRIST—something you can never let go. It shall come to you; when or how I cannot tell; but it shall come.

'Perhaps it may be at the end of your life, when the shadows of this world pass away, and the morning breaks over the Everlasting Hills. You shall see the King in His beauty, whom you have tried to follow at such a distance off. Then will you say: "O GOD, Thou art my GOD, JESUS CHRIST, Thou didst come to earth for me. LORD, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes *have seen* Thy salvation."'

As with the New Year's Eve sermon, so with the Sunday morning sermon. The one we have quoted might have been preached any time during the long ministry at St. Alban's. In cold print a sermon of Stanton's may seem nothing very remarkable, and he, with his wise perception, understood this, and gave as a reason for refusing publication that he could not face the *littera scripta* —'words spoken vanish into thin air, but *littera*

scripta manet.' (Two other reasons given by Father Stanton for not publishing were: (1) That the best part of the sermon were the plums taken from other sources, about which Mr. Spurgeon said that if you did take them, you must take care to stone them first. (2) That if published they could not be preached again, even in different circumstances and with other illustrations.)

One or two sayings of Father Stanton's at the Sunday morning sermons have been jotted down, and may be reproduced here.

Speaking of property he once said: 'After all, there is nothing so very much our own as our sins.'

Of winning friends: 'Now, many a man would become a friend if we would let him do us a kindness. Be beholden to him, and the animosity is gone.'

On temptation: 'We can't any of us do without temptations; they are the only things that humble us.'

On sin: 'Some would never be brought to confess they were sinners until they had fallen into some terrible sin.'

On the sins of the devil: 'I give you three sins of the devil—pride, envy, jealousy. They are the most deadly sins, and, mind you, they are sins we hate.'

'There is no pleasure in envy or jealousy for the sinner. Other sins—of the world and the flesh—give their fleeting pleasure. But those who are envious and jealous are only miserable all the time.'

On hell: 'Hell is a craving for sin, the committing of sin, and hating yourself for doing it.'

On sin as the result of ignorance: 'The deeper the sin, the greater the ignorance. I don't think

a man who commits murder knows how bad a thing it is he does. And that's where the hope of forgiveness lies. "They know not what they do."'

It was not Stanton's way to give up any soul as lost. Preaching the Three Hours on Good Friday, he declared that he couldn't believe the Impenitent Thief died unrepentant. 'No one who had been so near the SAVIOUR as he was could be unmoved by the presence of his LORD.'

On another Good Friday, speaking of the arrest of CHRIST in the garden, he said: 'When CHRIST said, "I am He," they all fell back—"they went backward, and fell to the ground" (St. John xviii. 6). And the assurance I gather is this: Don't be dismayed at any sacrilegious handling either of the Gospel or the SAVIOUR. He can defend Himself; GOD can take care of His Truth. The assailants, His enemies, will fall back.'

If the test of a speaker, as of a literature, is the catholicity of appeal, Father Stanton must be counted a great preacher. 'What a net St. Alban's has been!' said Stanton once, preaching on the text, 'Fishers of men,' adding, after a long pause, 'and what queer fish we have caught!' His Watch Night Services drew the poor and unlearned, and the outcasts of our Israel. The Sunday morning and Good Friday sermons were, in the main, addressed to religious, GOD-fearing souls of the Church of England. The Monday night sermons in Advent, Lent, and August were listened to by people of all religions and no religion. It was not until the 'nineties of the last century St. Alban's was really thronged regularly on these Monday nights by the strangely mixed congregation that gathered from all parts. Not only from London did people come to hear Stanton, but country visitors, and Americans, and

Colonials all made their way to St. Alban's, especially on Monday nights in August.

We quote a few typical sayings jotted down at various times.

The antiquity of Christianity: 'Our religion was ordained before the foundation of the world. People talk of old religions, but there is no religion so old as Christianity, for it was before the world was made.'

Religious experience: 'If you take your religion second hand, then it is easy to lose it; but if you have fought out your difficulties for yourself it will stick.'

'The prayers printed in books are like ready-made clothes; they don't always fit.'

Money: 'People say money can buy anything, but it will not buy the best things of life—love and honour.'

God's Providence (St. John vi.): 'When you make calculations don't be like Philip and Andrew, and leave out the most important feature—Jesus. Don't leave Him out of your calculations.'

Perhaps the most famous of all the Monday night sermons was a series on 'The Prodigal Son,' in Lent, 1908. Two hours before the service began people began to pour into the church, and long before eight o'clock (the hour of service) many were turned away. There were no choristers or ritual at these Monday nights. It was just a simple unliturgical service of hymns, Bible reading, prayer, and sermon. Every possible place for man or woman was occupied. The chancel and the altar-steps, right up to the altar itself, were crowded by men too late for a seat, or for standing room in the body of the church. Some good persons thought it not quite reverent to the holy place that men in ordinary workaday clothes should be sitting

so close to the altar. But Stanton, who had received remonstrances to that effect, said, in the pulpit, quite simply, that he didn't think in GOD's sight a black coat was less reverent than a choir boy's cotta, and, of course, all the officers at St. Alban's, clergy and churchwardens alike, were delighted at the crowds that came week after week, and year after year. For everybody at St. Alban's was proud of Father Stanton. (As for the jealousy that sometimes arises between fellow-clergymen—as it does with other public speakers—there never was any room at all for it at St. Alban's; the very notion is ludicrous, to suppose jealousy at St. Alban's. Why, one might as well imagine that the clergy went there to make money out of the church!) And then everybody in authority at St. Alban's—clergy and laity—also had something of Stanton's Evangelical missionary fervour for the souls of men. Here are three sayings from those sermons on 'The Prodigal Son' remembered by those who were present:

'Some of us cannot get home to GOD till we have been in the far country with the swine.'

'The service of GOD you may leave at once, for His service is perfect freedom. But the devil's service is slavery, and we can't leave the devil's service all at once.'

'The cry of love mounts higher than the cry of justice—"I will arise."'

In 1907 the public tribute to the preacher of the Monday night sermons was paid—but only partly paid—at the gathering at the Holborn Town Hall, when Nonconformists joined with Churchmen in doing honour to the man they loved, and in acknowledging the truth and beauty of his ministry, and his message.

In 1910, at the annual Easter meeting of the

vestry of St. Alban's, it was moved by the Rev. R. A. J. Suckling, Vicar, seconded by the churchwardens, and carried unanimously, that a special record be made in the vestry book of the gratitude to Father Stanton for his remarkable Monday evening services; and the following resolution was adopted, with a request that a copy be sent to Father Stanton: 'The vestry desire to record the wonderful success of Father Stanton's Monday evening preaching in Advent, Lent, and the month of August in each year. This is shown by the ever-increasing number of people who flock to hear him, it being impossible to find even standing room for them all, and many have to go away. His teaching and his Gospel services are known wherever the English language is spoken, and the vestry desire to record their gratitude and appreciation for the marvellous work he does at St. Alban's.'

The last of the Monday night sermons was preached in August, 1912, and Father Stanton was then talking about being an old man—he was seventy-three—and preaching less, and 'slowing down into the terminus.' But he had talked of being an old man any time in the previous ten years, and people were accustomed to it.

The absolute assurance of the truth of the Christian religion, the absence of all doubt, and the sure confidence in GOD were among the things that made Stanton's preaching so attractive. He never could see that Christians should give up the smallest item of their faith, at the bidding of those who did not believe in CHRIST or in revealed religion. The heresies of the 'new theology' and 'modernism' were hateful to him, because they assailed, as he saw quite clearly, the very foundations of the Christian faith of the multitudes—the

Catholic faith of the ages—the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection, and the revelation given in the Bible. But there was no question of allowing these heresies to triumph over the truth, or of yielding a point here or there to the demands of the heretics.

What Stanton admired and loved most in the Roman Catholic Church was the fact that it had kept and maintained the faith through the centuries. 'Unless our faith is founded on the Incarnation and the Atonement it is not Christianity,' he said on one occasion. 'The strength of Protestantism has been the preaching of CHRIST crucified from the pulpit; the strength of Roman Catholicism has been the representation of CHRIST crucified in the Blessed Sacrament, and all else is foolishness.'

England, in Stanton's eyes, was not really a Christian country, because it had no sincere belief in the Incarnation. 'It was a Christian country once,' he said, 'in the Middle Ages, before the shrines were plundered and the altars fell in that Reformation that nearly reformed us out of religion. And what has been the religion since that date? There has been a good deal of Christian foam on the still water of English life —Puritan, High Church, Evangelical, Catholic— and at times it has seemed that England was a Christian country of some kind. But that was merely surface foam. The true England that lies beneath it is, in the main, no doubt moral, respectable, and with a strong sense of duty; but its religion is Theism, not Christianity. England will never again be Christian until the Angelus bell rings from every steeple in the land.'

A good many people wondered how it was that Stanton, with his beliefs, did not become a Roman

Catholic. He preached from the fulness of his heart on the love of CHRIST in the Mass. He taught us that the service of Holy Communion was the sacrifice of the Mass to be offered for the living and the dead; that personal confession of sins was not a means of grace for extraordinary occasions and exceptional people, but was the Sacrament of Penance for all to use, and use frequently; and that devotion and reverence were due to CHRIST'S Mother: so that we learnt to say the 'Hail Mary' and to ask Our Lady's Prayers. 'If you love JESUS CHRIST, you can't help loving His Mother too,' Stanton often said. 'There never was anyone who could be nearer to CHRIST than His Blessed Mother.' And at St. Alban's, Holborn, on a Monday night, when Stanton would say, 'Hail Mary, full of grace; the LORD is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, JESUS,' from the great majority of those present came the reply instinctively, 'Holy Mary, Mother of GOD, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.' The Mass, the Confessional, and Our Lady were part and parcel of Father Stanton's Christianity, interwoven inextricably in his religious life—and yet he remained in the Church of England.

The fact, on consideration, is not really a matter for astonishment. For one thing, Stanton was a born rebel, and felt no constraint to submit to the authority of Rome. And then the idea of a visible Church, one and indivisible, was not so strong in its appeal to him as the thought of personal salvation and the natural unity of believers. Stanton didn't doubt that he was a priest of the Catholic Church, with the power to say Mass and absolve sinners. At times the separations of Christendom,

he felt, were sad and terrible; but still those who loved the LORD were one at heart, whether they were Protestant or Catholic, Church of England or Nonconformist, and in GOD'S good time there would be unity again. Meanwhile, we could all unite in saying prayers together, in singing hymns, and in acts of goodwill. Underneath the divisions he saw the common faith, and dwelt on that. Geographical considerations, too, were a good deal responsible for our respective religions. 'If you people here had been born in Spain,' Stanton would say, 'you would have been Roman Catholics, and if you had been born in Scotland, you would have been Presbyterians.'

But the notion of a 'national' Church, and of an 'Anglo'-Catholicism, was altogether repugnant to Stanton. 'It is Pharisaism,' he said, 'to say that it is right to go to a Roman Catholic Church on the Continent and wrong to go to one in England.' GOD had made of one blood all nations, and Rome had kept the faith. Stanton at heart couldn't be a separatist. Gladly he would live in unity with all who loved the LORD JESUS CHRIST —Anglican, Nonconformist, Roman Catholic. No word of antagonism to those who worshipped at altars outside the Church of England fell from his lips. Many a Thursday he sat in bygone years at the feet of his neighbour, Dr. Parker, in the City Temple.

To a friend, who became a Roman Catholic, Stanton wrote in January, 1912: 'I shall live and die in the Church of England, and I trust my GOD who created me and my SAVIOUR who died for me never to forsake me. I hope that you will find the same strong hope in your Church, for, after all, those who love GOD belong to the soul of CHRIST itself.'

That was it with Father Stanton: those who loved GOD belonged to the soul of CHRIST, and were members of 'the Church invisible.' The frontiers of the divisions of Christendom, and the barriers erected thereon, could not hinder the free passage of hearts that possessed the passport of the love of GOD.

The old-fashioned Evangelical Protestant, Anglican, or Nonconformist was happy in hearing Stanton preach, because the Gospel preached was full of the love of a personal SAVIOUR, and of the great gift to man of the Holy Scriptures.

Anglicans holding Catholic doctrines were either confirmed in their attachment to the Church of England by Father Stanton's ministry—for why, with Catholic Sacraments and a ritual that far surpassed in beauty and scenic effect the proceedings at an ordinary Roman Catholic Church, and with such a priest as Father Stanton, should anyone leave St. Alban's to make submission to Rome? —or, learning familiarity with the externals of Catholicism at St. Alban's, and taught the Catholic doctrines of the Mass and of Penance, they sought, inevitably, to be joined in communion with the See of Peter, whence had come religion in England, and from which the Church of England had been cut off at the Reformation. To these latter it was evident that, whatever St. Alban's and its clergy might be, the Church of England was not the Catholic Church of our forefathers.

But the passage to Rome of those who were old worshippers at St. Alban's never brought with it the loss of gratitude to the church where the rudiments and fundamentals of Christianity had been learnt, and where Stanton had taught the meaning of the Mass and the gospel of goodwill.

The following note appeared in the *Tablet*—the

leading Roman Catholic paper in England—on Stanton's death, and it expressed the feelings of hundreds, possibly thousands, who worshipped at St. Alban's during Stanton's ministry, and later left the Church of England for communion with Rome:

'A correspondent writes: "The name of Arthur Henry Stanton (late curate of St. Alban's, Holborn) is dear to many converts from Anglicanism to the Church, and they will have heard, not without emotion, of his passing hence. His death took place on Friday, 28 ult. He was a large-souled, tender-hearted man, whom to know was to love. But chiefly we remember him with gratitude as a preacher of 'the Gospel, whose music led us home' to our true Mother, the Catholic Church; the Mother of whom he preached so sweetly, without, alas! ever knowing the joy of submission to her authority."'

Perhaps the secret of Father Stanton's success as a preacher is told in the advice he once gave to all his fellow-preachers, and most steadily followed in his own ministry: 'Remember, our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST has made you fishers of men, and a good fisher keeps himself well out of sight. Let your Master be always to the fore and yourself in the background. Then, when the time comes for you to go behind the scenes, and for others to take your place, you will be comforted by the words of the greatest among men of all the preachers, *Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui*.'

CHAPTER V

FATHER STANTON'S POLITICS

STANTON was always a Liberal in politics, a Liberal with warm Radical sympathies, and far removed from mere academic Whiggery. He came of a Liberal family, and his chivalry placed him definitely and consistently on the side of the poor and oppressed, for whom, it seemed to him, Liberal principles promised some relief.

Stanton's Liberalism was robust; 'I know no Liberalism except that which I have sucked in from the breasts of the Gospel,'* he once declared. It was a Liberalism not learnt from party managers, no mere shibboleth of party politicians, nor formulæ of a mechanical democratic machine. A Liberal Arthur Stanton was, through and through, but he never belonged to the Liberal 'Party,' never spoke on Liberal platforms, and never joined a Liberal Association. No political or economic creed could supplant the Gospel of CHRIST, and it never occurred to Stanton to substitute political work for his religious ministry, or to imagine that political or social reforms could take the place of Christian worship or of the Sacraments, or render them unnecessary for mankind. The unruly wills and affections of sinful man remained, whatever reforms were accomplished.

From the first at St. Alban's Stanton's democratic convictions were respected. 'I was never

* Quoting Lacordaire.

snubbed,' he said, concerning his early sermons in the 'sixties; 'I always remember the kindness of the clergy regarding this matter. They gave me every encouragement. Not only was I full of the rights of the Church, but also of the rights of man, and I fear my raw Radicalism must have been at times very distasteful to them, as I know it was to some of the congregation; still, I received little or no discouragement.'

For all the 'raw Radicalism' and ardour for 'the rights of man,' the pulpit at St. Alban's never could be mistaken for a political platform by preacher or hearers.

Father Stanton, doubtless, was a notorious Radical. Mother Kate, of Haggerston Priory, has noted how he was chaffed as a revolutionary at the time of the Paris Commune. But he never forgot that he was a minister of the Gospel, and his ministry knew no political distinctions; and Liberals, Conservatives, and Socialists worshipped side by side at St. Alban's without thought of their political differences. For above these temporal differences, rightly judged of importance in this temporal world, were the eternal Gospel of the Incarnate GOD, the eternal Sacrifice of Calvary, and the eternal verities of man's salvation, transcending the things of time. To be better citizens, to live more neighbourly lives, to be willing to extend such liberties as we possess to others, and to be ready to serve all who needed our service—these were the politics we learnt from the pulpit of St. Alban's.

But Stanton was far too keenly interested in the world around him—for all his unworldliness of spirit—not to have strong political convictions, and far too frank and open a man to conceal those convictions.

As early as 1870 he joined the Liberation Society for the Disestablishment of the Church of England, and remained a member of that society until 1877, when Mackonochie, with other Churchmen, started the 'Church League for Promoting the Separation of Church and State.' Mackonochie was in general politics a Conservative, as his successor is, but he held that the interference of the secular government in questions of Church ritual and doctrine was an intolerable wrong to the Church, and a wrong that would only end by disestablishment and disendowment. 'Our demand for Disestablishment must be a demand, at least as earnest, for Disendowment. It will not do, in an age of realities such as this is, to claim liberty, and yet keep the fetters which have made us slaves,' Mackonochie wrote in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1877. Stanton, boldly venturing his life as a knight of the Cross, wanted no State protection for the enterprise. He would have neither policeman nor gunboat, neither magistrate nor any officer of Cæsar to look after the bodily comfort of Christian missionaries who had embarked on the high following of the Apostles; and, on the other hand, joyously taking all risks, he would not that magistrates and State officials should hinder the mission.

With the experience of what 'establishment,' with its fifteen years of persecution, meant at St. Alban's, Stanton never had a good word for the union of Church and State. Looked at from every point of view, it seemed to him a grievous mistake. 'Established' and 'endowed' were words that came with a touch of scorn from Stanton's lips. 'Now, who ever heard of an established stranger, or an endowed pilgrim?' he once said in a sermon, reminding us that we were but strangers and pilgrims in this world.

'I haven't the faith to expect that working men will come in crowds to the Church of England while it is established and endowed,' he said on another occasion.

And on Good Friday, preaching the Three Hours, Stanton emphasised that it was the priests —the high-priests—of the Established Church at Jerusalem who crucified the Redeemer of the world.

The rooted dislike of endowments, quite as strong in Stanton as the dislike of establishment, was there till the end. He approved of Welsh Disestablishment because it was a partial application of the principle; and less than a week before his death he bequeathed £5,000 to the Vicar and churchwardens of St. Alban's for the use of the parish, on condition that the services in church went on as usual, and—so Mr. George W. E. Russell tells me—that the money was spent right away and not made into an endowment.

Stanton was, naturally, a supporter of Home Rule for Ireland; partly because he was born with rebel sympathies, and also because of a love for Catholic Ireland, nourished by a visit made with Dolling about 1880. Stanton and Dolling were in Ireland for a month; they stayed with Cardinal Logue at Armagh, and with Dr. Alexander, the (Protestant) Bishop of Derry. 'We came back,' Stanton told the present writer, 'quite convinced that Home Rule was an imperative measure of justice. The simple goodness and piety of the Irish peasantry never could be moulded to fit the commercial morality of England. The two nations were so different that each needed its own form of government.'

St. Alban's, Holborn, with characteristic charity, sent a good deal of money to Cardinal Logue

when the people of Donegal were famine-stricken, and on Mackonochie's death the Cardinal wrote to the Rev. E. F. Russell to express his sympathy:

'ARMAGH,
'*December* 23, 1887.

'MY DEAR MR. RUSSELL,

'Permit to convey to you and your colleagues at St. Alban's the assurance of my sincere sympathy with you in the very severe affliction which the early death of the Rev. Mr. Mackonochie must have been to you all.

'I would have written at once on seeing the sad news in the papers, but it is so long since I have had any communication with St. Alban's that I was not sure whether either you or Rev. Mr. Stanton, the only members of your community, besides poor Mr. Mackonochie, with whom I was personally acquainted, were still there. I am very glad that the mention of your name in the papers as having delivered an address at St. Alban's yesterday evening affords me an opportunity of paying this debt of gratitude. I cannot forget how nobly you and your brethren at St. Alban's, including the lamented deceased, came to my aid when my poor starving people in Donegal stood in such need of sympathy and assistance. Would that I could give you some more pleasing token of my remembrance and gratitute than that of condoling with you on the death of your dear friend; but since it has pleased Divine Providence to visit you and your reverend brethren with such a heavy cross, I am sure a word of sympathy will be grateful to you.

'I am, dear Mr. Russell,

'Yours most faithfully,

'✠ MICHAEL LOGUE.

Stanton was not given to signing addresses or joining societies (the membership in the Liberation Society was quite an exceptional case), but early in 1884, when Charles Bradlaugh was still in the thick of his fight for admission to the House of Commons, a declaration was drawn up by a number of Anglican clergymen in favour of the Affirmation Bill, and this was signed by 'Arthur Henry Stanton, curate of St. Alban's, Holborn.'

The Declaration—got up as a counterblast to a petition signed by 13,000 clergymen against the Affirmation Bill—was in the following words: 'We, the undersigned clergymen of the Church of England, desire to express our hope that the House of Commons will shortly pass an Affirmation Bill, or other measure calculated to secure the removal of the last remaining religious disability.' [Amongst others who signed this Declaration were Canon Barnett; Archdeacon Escreet; H. Scott Holland; T. A. Lacey; the late Bishops of Truro (Stubbs) and Norwich (Sheepshanks); Canon Benham; Dr. William Cunningham; Professor F. J. A. Hort, Dr. Jex-Blake, Head Master of Rugby; Dr. E. A. Abbott, Head Master of the City of London School; Canon A. J. Mason; W. A. Spooner, of New College, Oxford; J. M. Wilson, Head Master of Clifton; and Dean Plumptre, of Wells.]

Desiring the removal of religious disabilities and the admission of a duly elected free-thinker to the House of Commons, Stanton felt equally bound, as a political Radical, to support the removal of sex disabilities, and the admission of women to the franchise. He was always for fair play all round, and wanted no favours from the State; for Stanton's notion of democracy was 'desiring nothing for oneself that was not granted to others

on equal terms,' and he was fond of quoting those lines of Lowell's:

'. . . and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.'

At the same time there was no enthusiasm for abstract political rights in Father Stanton. Women were not to be refused the franchise, since they claimed it; but the franchise meant increased responsibility, and would not be, he thought, 'an unmixed gain' to women.

When the London County Council came into existence, Stanton warmly supported the Progressives locally in their municipal policy, and defended the L.C.C. from the pulpit: 'People abuse it,' he said, 'but the County Council has done more good for London in ten years than Parliament has done in a hundred.'

For his friend, the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, Stanton made a political excursion from St. Alban's, a thing he was never wont to do. It was in the 'eighties when Stanton went to Bethnal Green, and spoke in support of Mr. Headlam, then a member of the London School Board, at the old Commonwealth Club.*

* It was in this same Commonwealth Club, a Radical republican institution that flourished in Bethnal Green thirty years ago, that Stanton once gave a lecture on 'Equality' (one of three lectures on 'Liberty,' 'Equality,' 'Fraternity') on a Sunday night in 1877. The lecture was received with applause; but, in the discussion that followed, an old-fashioned, incorruptible shoemaker in the audience wanted to know why Mr. Stanton, if he believed in equality, was wearing a special dress? Stanton, never at a loss, gathered up his ragged cassock, and, looking at it ruefully, said: 'Well, it's not much to boast of as a dress, but I thought as this was a workmen's club I might come in my working clothes.' On another occasion, more than thirty years ago now, when Stanton was lecturing at this non-

The work of the London School Board, and the value of the education given by the London teachers, first under the School Board and since 1902 under the County Council, to the children of London, aroused an enthusiasm in Stanton as strong and as sincere as the enthusiasm he had for the early social reform policy of the Progressives on the County Council. His wholehearted belief in the good work done by the Board School teachers and his innate Liberalism made him dislike all proposals for religious tests for teachers in Council schools, and possibly his love for the Bible reconciled him to the simple Bible-reading which is called 'religious instruction' in these schools. Not that Stanton could ever accept the 'unsectarian' Bible instruction as a 'religion' for children, or for anybody else; but his old Liberationist point of view came in here. It was not the business of the State to teach 'religion' in the schools or in the churches. The children might read the Bible—why not? if their parents desired it—but the State had no business to impose Protestant or Catholic doctrines on the children attending the common schools. 'The real thing is to get religion taught by men and women

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teetotal club, a man sitting close by the platform, and provided with the usual pot of beer—without which no lecture could be listened to with due attention in the Radical Clubs of the period—looked up thoughtfully at the speaker, and before taking a drink himself, passed the pewter up to Stanton, merely saying gravely and quite respectfully, 'Dry work, yours, mister.' And Stanton, recognising the courtesy and goodwill of the giver, replied with a word of thanks, and put the mug to his lips. I am told that in the same spirit Stanton many years later became, for a time, a total abstainer—for the sake of 'a pal' who was in need of help, and who was only persuaded to keep off the drink by the assurance that 'the Father' would keep off it as well.

who believe in it, by converted men and women,' Stanton maintained, and to make inquisition of the faith of teachers was beyond the province of the State.

The Guild of St. Edmund was started in 1892 at the instance of a few Board School teachers to provide social intercourse for teachers, and to promote 'a better understanding amongst clergy and others concerning the régime of Board Schools, and thus remove any prejudices which might be felt against them.' The Rev. G. R. Hogg, of St. Alban's, Holborn, an old manager of a local group of schools, has been the devoted Warden of the Guild from the start, and Father Stanton preached the sermon when the Guild was inaugurated at a service in St. Mary's, Charing Cross Road, and became one of its patrons.

The Guild of St. Edmund has the famous Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury for its patron saint, and at the annual meeting of the Guild in June, 1894, Stanton referred with pleasure to the fact that Dr. Horton had lectured to the members. 'One circumstance which has especially attracted me to the Guild,' said Stanton, 'is the fact that it numbered amongst its lecturers during the past year Dr. Horton, the great Congregationalist minister of Hampstead. And I should like to see the name of Cardinal Vaughan amongst those for the ensuing year.' (Referring to the sarcastic remark which had recently appeared in a Church paper that the members had better wear hair shirts, after the example of their patron saint, Stanton went on to advise them not to commence this practice on the occasion of their proposed visit to Canterbury, as it might be productive of 'a 'itch in the journey'!)

But with all this strong respect for the Council

schools, and warm admiration for the work done in these schools by the teachers, Stanton was no enemy of Church schools. When in 1908 an Education Bill, that threatened the existence of Church schools, was brought in by the Government, Stanton from the pulpit at St. Alban's denounced as unjust the interference with schools where the Christian religion was taught.

In foreign politics Stanton was all for the Balkan States against the Turk, and he had often expressed his hope that the various peoples who were under Ottoman rule would gain their freedom.

Without being at all an Imperialist—regarding Cecil Rhodes as 'a great adventurer' and the Outlanders of the Transvaal with scant sympathy —Stanton could no more declare himself against the South African War than Dolling could. He believed the Boers were unsatisfactory governors of the native races, and that the war would in the end make for the betterment of the latter. 'War is a bad thing, but there is a worse thing—slavery,' Stanton said in his sermon when war had just been declared. But in another sermon some time later, the horror he felt for war—all the waste and wickedness of it—came out; and in words very similar to those used by Carlyle, he said: 'Now, why should we dress up one workman in red, and another in blue, give each of them a rifle, and then tell them to try and kill one another? Is it right?'

Two incidents in Father Stanton's life may close appropriately this account of his politics.

On December 5, 1888, the Guild of St. Matthew arranged a meeting of clergy at Sion College to hear an address from the author of 'Progress and Poverty,' and advocate of the Single Tax on land

values—Henry George, who was then in England on a short visit. At the close of the meeting the vote of thanks to Henry George was moved by the Rev. A. H. Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn.

The second story comes from the Rev. Stewart Headlam, and I give it in his own words: 'The last time I saw Stanton, a year or two ago, I walked with him from the Temple Station to the Gladstone Statue, and, standing there, he said: "My dear fellow, what do you think consoles me most, Lloyd George and his Budget? But how the swells do hate him!"'

The saying of the great French Dominican, Père Lacordaire, 'I hope to die a penitent Catholic and an impenitent Liberal,' always pleased Stanton.

CHAPTER VI

'DAD'—THE GOOD SAMARITAN

AMONGST the mass of flowers that were laid on Father Stanton's coffin there was a wreath that had the word 'Dad' arranged on it. And it was the last tribute of affection from those to whom for many years Father Stanton had just been 'Dad.' How Stanton came to be called 'Father' Stanton, he declared he never knew. The title was certainly not conferred upon him by ecclesiastical authority. In the advertisement of his August sermons at St. Alban's he was always styled 'Mr. Stanton.' But far back in the history of St. Alban's the people in the parish took to calling the clergy 'Father,' and the word stuck. The Press long ago decided that the Rev. A. H. Stanton was 'Father Stanton,' and that of course settled it.

But in a special sense Stanton was a father, and more than a father, to his old friends of St. Alban's, just as he was the 'pal' of all sorts and conditions of men who were not of the St. Alban's congregation. The goodwill of this friend of man overflowed beyond parish boundaries, and his affection was lavished on all who sought it and responded.

Besides the poor, and the 'undeserving poor' in particular, who claimed his help, Stanton had

his St. Martin's League for twenty-five years, his Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth, his Mothers' Meeting, and his Sunday afternoon tea at the clergy-house for the lads and youths of the surrounding slums and alleys.

The St. Martin's League was started in Stanton's room in May, 1877, when three or four postmen proposed that a club and a society for Post Office servants should be formed. A month later the League was formally established, and Stanton preached at the inaugural service in St. Alban's Church. A medal was designed for the members with the motto, 'Non recuso laborem.' Membership at first was confined to postal employés belonging to the Church of England, and those employés who were not Churchmen could only be associates. But the restriction to the Church of England was disliked by Stanton, and in 1884 the annual meeting of members got rid of the test. Henceforth the League was open to all employed by the Post Office without religious distinction.

The objects of St. Martin's League were 'love to God and man':

'To God: by endeavouring to lead good lives.'

'To man: by having at heart the common brotherhood of humanity, and trying to live up to the principles of fraternity.'

The particular and definite object of the League was 'to supply houses of rest for postmen during the intervals which necessarily occur when they are not actually engaged in the delivery of letters.'

Stanton was the President of the League, and its moving spirit, during the twenty-five years of its existence. Dolling; Mr. Walter Schröder, the League's devoted Treasurer; Colonel Barrington Foote; and many others were identified with St. Martin's League.

In his first letter to St. Martin's League, dated Martinmas, 1877, when in its first six months over one hundred members had been enrolled, Stanton wrote to his 'Brother Men':

'Well, I think my being President is a mistake. I don't see how you could well have chosen anyone else just at present, for you saw no one was at command who took so much interest in the League as myself. Still, for reasons too obvious to need explanation, I am not the right man; and many will hesitate to join us as long as I am President of the League.' He went on to say: 'I hear some think we pretend to be better than other people; I hope we do not. Our rule is to try to be better than we are, and not to try and be better than other people. Again, I hear that others think we are not religious enough. These last are no doubt nearer the mark. Let us try and be more religious; only we must not pretend to be so before we are. But don't mind being criticized; it is right we should be, and it does us good, and keeps us in order.'

Of course Stanton was not allowed to give up the Presidency of St. Martin's League, and the letter he sent every year to its members told how close they were to his heart. 'Our love to man must flow over the boundaries of our League,' he wrote in 1878. And in 1884, alluding to those who had passed away: 'The *blessing* here is that we have clasped hands and felt the warmth that springs from one another's hearts, the *expectation* is that one day we shall be together "for ever and for ever." Enthusiasm for humanity, amid the changes and chances of this mortal life, would be but heartache could we not pluck this heartsease from the pastures of Paradise. As you, dear fellows, keep coming out of the past, resting

awhile with us on the road, and then going out into the unknown future, our hope lives on the promise of our undying companionship with one another and with GOD.'

From the Rocky Mountains in October, 1885, Stanton writes to the League:

'I only wish I could fill your lungs with the keen clear air of this place, and that we had an invalid house out here, for there are some of you in my thoughts now who are not fit to work on in the streets of dear, dank, dusty, dirty, dingy London. I have often pictured to myself our camping out together in the forests, in the sweet, warm, resinous air. How the woods would echo, and how astonished the great trees would be! The dear Indians would have a look round, and little difficulties might arise: so perhaps it is better as it is, only one always longs for others to enjoy what one enjoys so much oneself.'

That the mission of the League was love and not success its President continually affirmed. 'Only remember, we exist not for schemes or success, power or place, but for man—for GOD,' he wrote on St. Martin's Day, 1881. 'All combinations nowadays are to effect wonders for the uprooting of abuses, or the establishment of a new order of things. We, on the other hand, have no object save that of chumming with one another, and this for the LOVE of GOD.'

The League was not to be a recruiting ground for the Church of England, and Stanton made this clear at the outset: 'We are all agreed,' he wrote in 1878, in the thick of the St. Alban's lawsuits, 'in repudiating religious controversy; and we are rather a mixed set, too: red-hot Ritualists and earnest Low Churchmen, faithful Roman Catholics and staunch Dissenters; high,

low, and broad, we all meet and agree to differ, our object being love to GOD and man. In this I think we give a hint to the religious world as it is called. Some of you think I do not do enough distinctly religious work among you; I do, on principle, nothing beyond what is contained in our rules. Of course I am always delighted to talk to any of you on religious subjects, but I think it better for you to consult the clergy of the Church where you attend. I am a Ritualist; but St. Martin's League is not a Ritualistic trap.'

Love was the only thing that mattered in the League: 'Right away, I urge, see to our object to try and *love* one another. You smile as you read this, as you always do when I tell you this is our bounden duty. We are not only to put up with one another, but to love one another with all that word "love" implies—choice, sacrifice, and union. Again you smile, and say, as you always say, "How can a fellow love a fellow?" I answer, "How can he not and live with him—what is League or Life without Love? There is no life, there can be no league, where love is not." I pray GOD bless the League. I don't mean the rules or the credit, matter or money, of the League, but the flesh and blood of it, us who make it up, all who help us to keep together in this sad world of separations. So may we all be bound as with "a golden cord about the Throne of GOD."'

Father Stanton refers to the boisterous high spirits of the League, whose members were nearly all young unmarried postmen, in his annual letter for 1884:

'We began the new year with a good resolution —no "chipping"—and what's more, *we have kept it*. To my great delight, we have all been more considerate of feelings and failings, and have re-

frained from exposing the weak points in each other's defensive armour, and more than this, to use our own simile, we have often willingly cut our cloak in half to throw over the nakedness of a brother. Next year we are going to add yet another resolve—no "chyaiking": and in this, I confess, I have been somewhat of an offender—but, sensible of declining years, I admit my faults and promise to amend, and be more staid, and set a better example. Although I am so penitent, still I can't help thinking we have all of us made great progress, although we fail to notice it. Just as summer succeeds spring surely and silently, leaving here and there little indications of advancement, so too with us; china and glass appear on our mantelpieces, plates of cunning workmanship adorn our walls, bolsters and cushions last twice as long, and if anyone is hardy enough to propose "ructions," he is immediately sat upon, or at least his chest is. Why!—and let me call your memory to my aid—once upon a time we used to set apart a day, Monday, the day after the Sabbath rest, for just one allowable scrimmage!—and we had it, too. Those were the days of our barbaric infancy, now we have come to cultured adolescence. After 1884 no (is this the right way to spell the word?) "chyaiking."'

But besides 'chipping' and 'chyaiking,' St. Martin's League had other forms of social entertainment. The sing-songs and 'at homes' were a great institution at the League, and ladies often gave their services on these occasions. 'You know it is one of my pet ideas to get ladies to come amongst us, and lift us out of the rough ruts of life's toil-worn road,' Stanton wrote in 1884. He mentions in that letter that Miss Isabel Bateman, then a distinguished actress, but these many

years past a member of a Church of England sisterhood, came over from the Adelphi one afternoon 'and recited with so much pathos that I cried just a little, and I don't think I was the only one. I am sure we all felt good—at least I know I did; and you all looked a little queer as if you did, too, although no doubt you won't admit it. In my eyes she was as a clergyman in our midst, although without surplice and hood. I wrote and told her so; and I know she wasn't offended, for she said she would come again.'

Then, at the S.W. House, 'where the kitchen is large, we have, what we did call in the innocence of our heart, a "Tommy Dod." It really is this—tip up sixpence all round, and have what dinner you can get for the money. It has been a great success.' This was in 1883, when, as Stanton wrote, 'on one occasion we had ladies of the highest rank and position dining with us; fortunately the menu was exceptionally good that day—"cold junk, spuds, and gooseberry duff." We all sat down together, and it reminded *me* of heaven—*i.e.*, not the duff, but the togetherness; but then, as you all know, I have only got one idea in my head.'

Robert Dolling—'Brother Bob,' as he soon was called—came to London and to St. Alban's in 1878, and was Stanton's friend at once. 'Brother Bob' threw himself into the Postmen's League, and lived as warden in the League's house for the South-East District in the Borough Road for about a year. Not only had St. Martin's its London houses of rest for postmen, but it had a seaside house at St. Leonard's as well, where men had board and residence for 14s. a week. As the annual subscription to the League was only 1s., and the membership never exceeded 700,

a good deal of money had to be raised to furnish and keep the London houses going, and no one will ever know exactly how much of this came out of Father Stanton's own pocket, but it was a very large amount. As the years went by, the need for the London houses diminished. The working hours of postmen were more concentrated, and the general conditions of post-office labour were improved. In 1895 three of the London houses were closed, and in 1898 the Eastern Branch House and the Seaside Holiday Home were given up. Finally, in 1902, the central house, St. Martin's House, 21 and 22, Brooke Street, was given up, and the League was dissolved. But there was no decay at the finish. The work of St. Martin's League stopped, because the necessity for its continuance no longer existed. 'They were happy, exuberant days which we shall never forget,' Father Stanton wrote when the houses were closed down. Mr. Walter Schröder wrote, summing up the work of the League: 'It engendered good feeling and fellowship, and kept the men healthy and happy, breaking into the monotony of their daily "walks." It was not pretended that anything further was attempted or performed. Its idea was social rather than anything else, and whatever work Godward was effected was done by good feeling and brotherly kindness amongst the members themselves, and by the associates (non-postmen) and other friends by their interest and help. The "outside" subscriber had recognised the work was sound and deserving of assistance, and that the members of the League were entitled to help for their public duties, performed as they were, at all hours and in all weathers, to the benefit of the community at large.

'Was there any lasting good? Those best able to judge reply, "Undoubtedly yes," and Father Stanton would be the first to say that his twenty-five years of labour and love for St. Martin's League show some of the best results of his life's work.'

Dolling, who left London on Stanton's advice to prepare for ordination, become a clergyman, and be known to the world as 'Father Dolling,' always spoke warmly of the old days at the Postman's House in Borough Road.

An old St. Martin's Leaguer, on Father Stanton's death, wrote in the *Church Times*, recalling the early years of the League: 'When a member happened to be in trouble or under an official shadow, he was generally comforted by Father Stanton, who talked plainly to him of his offences. At one period in the story of postal troubles in London, Father Stanton had considerable influence in restraining some of the more advanced men, though it was never without a clear understanding of the grievances under which the men suffered at the time. . . . Special care was taken of the newcomers to London, and there are many cases where young men on the verge of going wrong altogether were rescued by the good priest, who spared no trouble to get hold of them.

'Of course, not all the men were of Father Stanton's way of thinking, any more than they agreed with Father Dolling in the old days. But they recognised the saintliness of the man who ever loved them, and they felt his influence. Many stories could be told of young men who had been brought up as Dissenters and were under a sort of fear of him finding that he sympathised exactly with their central belief in our LORD, and making close friendship with him. It was this which

led so many to trust him absolutely. He knew an astonishingly large number of men by name, and even when they were not in uniform he used to stop to speak to them, always taking the initiative himself. He had a marvellous memory for these men, and it was his happy way of making each of them feel his personal friendship which added so much to his influence. One of the most beautiful stories I know was of a man years ago who was a Primitive Methodist local preacher. He had a young colleague who had fallen into sin, and knowing that this colleague was a Churchman, actually suggested to him that he should go and see Father Stanton and confide in him. And this was at a time when Confession was viewed with more suspicion than it is to-day.

'The League is no more. There are several reasons for its decay. Probably the most important was the change in the social life of the men. This affected their places of residence, and fewer, in proportion, of them lived within easy reach of Brooke Street. Probably, too, there are more institutions nowadays which the men can join. So it comes about that, although there is no League, the influences which the League fostered are still cared for. There are many of us who owe everything to the good Father, and the work which he did in his own tender way among our men all those years. And it is not only the Churchmen who say this. He had the knack of working among us without giving us the feeling that we were a lower sort of being. He respected us, and that made all the difference, and because he respected us, we listened to him when he said things which we should certainly have resented from anyone who merely patronised us.

'A few months ago we had a reunion of the dear

old League, and we gathered together again to meet our old Father. Some of us, having been changed to distant offices, had not seen him for some years, and we were shocked to see him so changed. But when he spoke to us the dear voice lived again. It was a jolly night, and brought back the past to many of us. We were his boys again, though now we are grown up and have families of our own. But we shall never forget him and his influence and the Faith he loved.'

In January, 1888, the *Postal and Telegraph Gazette* contained an editorial paragraph:

'I am very glad to hear that a project is on foot with the object of presenting the Rev. A. H. Stanton with a testimonial in acknowledgment of the unvarying interest he has taken in postal officials generally. I wish it every success, and shall make sure of contributing my might—and my mite. The great secret of his success as a popular pastor is that he has discarded absolutely the pedestal of profession and caste which too many of his brethren of the cloth interpose between their sacred persons and the souls with whose care they are entrusted. Mr. Stanton is "hail fellow, well met" with everybody; he is not one's pastor, but one's pal.'

On the text of 'His Pastor and his Pal' these verses followed:

'"Let's have no bloomin' cryin'; I know I'm going fast,
I heard the doctor whisper that the night I cannot last.
I'm 'off duty' now for ever, my last collection's made,
I've got another 'walk' now—that long one in the shade.

'"But, mother, don't take on so! What if I *am* a-dyin'?
There's Jack and Bill ain't postmen—let's have no bloomin' cryin'.
Thank God, they've got good places, where health and wealth they'll find,
It's 'cause they're here to care you, I'm so easy in my mind.

'"That cough! it seems to tear me. 'Tis only now a week
Since I went to see the doctor, who'd hardly let me speak,
And said it was unmanly to complain 'about a cough.'
To-morrow they will know if I was 'shamming to be off.'

'"No, no! I am content—though it does seem rather rum
A-lying here so helpless, and so near to Kingdom Come.
Why has it grown so dark? The lamp—oh, now I know!
Keep near me, mother darling, Jack! Bill! until I go.

'"Don't cry, 'twill soon be over; 'tis dark with us to-night,
But I shall wake to-morrow where all is joy and light.
I'd like to hear of Jesus—to hear about His love,
And of the cruel death He died to win us homes above.

'"No, no! I want no parson; I've not been too good p'r'aps,
But I don't want no jawin' from the black-coat preaching chaps.
I want no bloomin' sermons, but talk I understand;
A kindly word to cheer me, a friendly grip of hand.

'"If only you could bring me Father Stanton—don't you know,
The clergy house, St. Alban's—the place I used to go,
To sing songs of an evening, and to doss there of a day,
And go there on Sunday when I felt inclined to pray?

'"*He'd* talk to me of Jesus, and come I'm sure he shall,
If you only say I want him; he's a parson—but my pal."
The poor, pale lips were tightened, and shorter came the breath;
The brow with dew was moistened—the clammy dew of death.

'He'd sunk into a torpor and seemed to be at rest—
His feeble strength was nurtured by Him who knows what's best.
An hour had slowly passed, and still he breathed on;
An hour—and while he lay asleep, the messenger had gone

'To the clergyman he'd mentioned his dying wish to tell.
But all who knew this "parson," knew one word would do as well.
They came on tiptoe to the bed, but he opened wide his eyes
As though he'd heard them coming, then he turns, and smiling, tries
To speak as he'd been speaking; but his breath won't bear the strain;
But still he voiced his dying thoughts, though speaking was in vain.
Four words he gasps—for speak, alas! again he never shall—
And smiled the while he gasped them: "Arthur!—Father!—Pastor!—Pal!"

'The story of our SAVIOUR's love fell on his dying ear,
In words of peace to comfort, and friendly tones to cheer.
His poor tossed soul was soothed, and ere morning broke the dark,
In heaven's peaceful haven was moored another barque.'

Others than postmen, living and dying, appreciated Stanton's work in the St. Martin's League.

Dean Church was one of the League's patrons. Mr. Ben Greet and his company gave a Pastoral Performance at Lowther Lodge in aid of the League funds, and Archbishop Tait, in February, 1882, preached to the League at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Referring to this sermon, Tait noted in his diary: 'To-day I have preached at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields to 500 postmen who form "St. Martin's League." Stanton deserves immense credit for getting together these young men. Sad that there should be such quarrels in the Church, and that men like Stanton should be mixed up in them.'

But who was it 'mixed up' Stanton in the quarrels? And why did Archbishop Tait utter no rebuke of those who made the quarrels? No

one can suggest that Stanton was a man who 'quarrelled' about Church matters. All his life he would live in peace with those who loved the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whether they were 'High Church' or 'Low Church,' Anglican, Nonconformist, or Roman Catholic. In fact, the 'unhappy divisions' of Christendom seemed to Stanton largely on the surface, and he grasped at the unity of hearts he saw beneath. Perhaps it is needless to say this word of episcopal approval was not published till after Tait's death.

How much the good fellowship of St. Martins' League meant to its president may be learnt from his words to the postmen in one of the Leagues' papers in 1888:

'My companions of ten years, whom I cherish with the deepest affection; who have kept the life in me when Church dignitaries had all but turned my blood into vinegar and my heart into stone,' Stanton wrote.

But when he was asked: Well, what good has the League done? Has it made the members High Church? Stanton could only answer: 'No. Talk as I will, I can't get the men to substitute incense for tobacco.' He added: 'But this we have done. We have shown many that even Ritualistic parsons can care for something else besides candles and "clergymen's clothes."'

The Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth was another society that was closely associated with Father Stanton, and was filled with his spirit. But the Brotherhood, unlike St. Martin's League, belonged to St. Alban's Church, and Stanton was its chaplain. It was really a religious guild, mainly, though far from exclusively, of workmen, and had its club-rooms, library, and chapel. Good fellowship and comradeship, in the most real sense, were

the conspicuous notes of this Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth. Its members caught Stanton's love for mankind, and had his religion, evangelical and Catholic, personal and social. From the Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth sprang that great institution—Stanton's Sunday Afternoon Tea, and the members of the Brotherhood managed the tea.

Father Stanton has told us what this Sunday Afternoon Tea was: 'It is an endeavour to bridge over that great gulf fixed between the roughest of the lads and ourselves, the gulf fixed so that we could not reach them, neither could they pass to us.

'The tea is from four to six on Sunday afternoons, all except the first Sunday in the month, when the Church lads come. Any lad from fourteen to twenty-five can come if he belongs to the parish, and, needless to say, the parish is stretched considerably. It doesn't matter what religion he is—Anglican, Roman, Jew, or nothing—we meet on the common ground of our common nature, which can enjoy a good tea and smoke, and sing the songs of the streets, and dance the dances we know, and tell the yarns of the week. Needless to say, they are very popular and very amusing; but the games of the occasion can only be seen and not described.

'Well, what *good* do they do? That's an appraisement impossible; we keep out of the way of the "coppers"; we have a sense of comradeship, fellowship, and friendship; we follow the little religion we have, if we have any, in our own way. But the religion of the thing remains in the fact that we meet together, sit down to a meal together, smoke together, and are happy together, and that is something which helps to bridge over the yawning gulf fixed in society betwixt men and men.'

These Sunday teas brought a host of 'pals' to Father Stanton. From the first at St. Alban's

the roughest of the lads in the parish—the people we now call 'hooligans,' though that much overworked and entirely horrible and unchristian word, hateful to Stanton, had not then been invented—were always very dear to Stanton's heart. He failed, he often said, to touch them, and doubted if any man had learnt how to get at the conscience of these outlaws of civilisation. They would come and see him, come on Sundays regularly for a time to a sort of class, and then disappear, to be seen no more. There were the 'Jacks,' for instance, who, from the slums of Gray's Inn Lane, were persuaded to gather in Stanton's room at the clergy house for several Sundays, and of whom he used to speak. They wouldn't give their names. 'We have all the same name—Jack; call us "the Jacks,"' was their answer to inquiries. 'Well, after they had been coming for a fairly long time, and I had given them the best instruction I could, they turned up one Sunday bringing a large German lithograph, framed, of CHRIST blessing little children. They said as I'd been very kind to them, and tried to do them good, would I accept this token of their gratitude. Of course, I accepted it, and then "the Jacks" simply disappeared, and no one ever saw or heard anything of them again. And no one ever discovered why they came, or what their coming meant, or where they got the picture from.'

They were in and out of prison a good deal, these youthful friends of Stanton's. They were frankly outlaws, with their own code of manners and morals, and they had a way of taking things.

'We never call them thieves,' Stanton said to me once. 'Of course, they take things sometimes that don't belong to them, and go to gaol; but we never call them thieves. There are our own boys,

you know, and I've always had a class of thirty or forty of them. We never speak of them as thieves; it wouldn't do at all.'

A party of lads—very casual attendants at the Sunday class—meeting Stanton in Greville Street a few days before Easter, said: 'Father, next Friday is Good Friday; give us a treat.' 'I told them,' said Stanton, 'that on Good Friday we don't give treats. We come to church; but that if they were to come to church we might think about a treat afterwards.' The boys turned up at St. Alban's on Good Friday evening, and joined in singing 'The Story of the Cross'; only instead of singing, 'Oh! I will follow Thee . . . unto the goal,' they mistook the last word, and sang, 'unto the gaol.' 'Well, at least they kept their word,' said Stanton, 'for they were all, every one of them, in prison before the year was out.'

In prison or out of prison they were Stanton's 'lads,' and when older his 'pals.'

Sometimes religion did touch them, and Stanton had a story or two of his friends to that effect:

'Once I went to preach in a West End church. I was followed there by one of my prison friends, who always professed himself converted in that church at that time. My text was, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms,' which he never forgot, and for ever repeated when he saw me. I have every reason to believe he was genuine. His was a bad case, and he had been flogged, and he certainly brought his friend, who had gone under a similar experience, and I think soon died of the ordeal—of the flogging. But his friend died penitent, and trusting in his SAVIOUR for all, and he himself went out to Canada and helped the Salvation Army.

'All the same, at that time the Vicar missed

a beautiful ivory crucifix from the pulpit; but I do not think my friend had anything to do with it. It was an unfortunate coincidence, that was all; only the Vicar said he was delighted to have me, but not sure that he was quite so pleased with my following. My poor friend subsequently, when he wrote, said he was "still *under* the everlasting arms," that I was a "jule in His crown," for that I had delivered him from the "jors of the lion"; by which it will be seen that neither his theology nor his spelling was all that could be desired. But his conviction was still paramount in his mind that my sermon converted him.'

Then there was Stanton's story of the man who came to the Watch Night Service, and walked up the aisle with a whisky bottle, inviting the congregation to partake. 'On being accosted by a policeman who came in, he remonstrated, saying, "I'm all right. I'm Father Stanton's pal." He was removed, offering the constable drinks, and from that day he never touched drink again, and six years after died a teetotaller, he was so shocked when he heard what he had done in the church while in drink.'

The notion that people of any kind should be got to come to church for what they would get in the way of temporals was quite against Stanton's mind. The tramps, criminals, felons, and roughs were relieved in their necessities by Stanton, because they were in need, and without any too fine investigation of their particular case. For many years there was a cupboard in Father Stanton's rooms at the clergy house where clothes were kept for those who wanted them, and the money for a night's doss was generally forthcoming, though the applicant as often as not was not even a parishioner.

To the remonstrances of prudent friends against this indiscriminate charity, Stanton would answer with a smile, 'I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.' What was money for—and Stanton all his life was a rich man, though few knew it—except to make friends with?

'I do not think the undeserving took him in,' wrote Father Russell. 'He could see through a "bad lot" as clearly as most people, but he had his own ideas in these matters, and remembered that if we were any of us treated strictly according to our deserts we should fair badly.'

But money was not to be used to bribe people to come to church. And Stanton had the story of a St. Alban's boy who was given a ticket to enable him to stay at an institution for three weeks, and ran away after three days. 'I met him,' said Stanton, 'and said, "What's the matter? Wasn't the food good?" "The food's all right," said the boy. "Weren't the beds comfortable?" "Yes, the beds were comfortable enough." "Was the air all right?" "Yes." "Well, then, what's the matter?" "It's like this," said the boy, "they make you go to church every day." "But surely you might have put up with that?" "No fear, Father, they'd 'ave made me a parson in three weeks."'

Sometimes the importunate beggar was not relieved. One of his Sunday boys called at the clergy house on a certain occasion when Stanton had given word that he was too tired to see any more that day. 'The housekeeper told the boy,' said Stanton, 'that I was tired, and could not see him, and I heard him say, "That's a nice message to send a boy in the parish. You tell him I want to see him spiritual." So, of course, I put on my biretta and came downstairs. When I got down

the stairs the boy said: "Father, that's a nice message to send to a pore boy in the parish—to go away because you are tired. I want to see you private. I don't want to see you out in this 'all, where everybody can 'ear our business. Mayn't we talk somewhere quiet?" So I said, "Come into the dining-room," and took him there, prepared for fearful revelations and spiritual difficulties, naturally! And then he said, "Father, you ain't got such a thing as a pair of trousers, 'ave yer?" So I said, "Yes, old chap, I have; and I have got them on!"'

There were suppers every year on certain days for these rough lads, and high revels at Christmas, under Father Stanton's auspices. Only three or four years ago, when I met Father Stanton in Father Russell's rooms in Brooke Street, he announced the bill of fare for one of these suppers—I think it was for St. Patrick's Day—sausages first, and then 'spotted dog'—a delectable pudding with big raisins; and the question was, How many sausages would a reasonable growing lad require with such a pudding to follow? I forget the answer, but Father Russell entered quite gravely into the discussion. On that same afternoon Stanton told us he had just seen some of his lads playing pitch-and-toss in one of the courts. 'They wanted someone to keep a lookout for the police, and asked me if I would "go dogger" for them. But I told them,' said Stanton, 'that it wasn't right for a clergyman of the Church of England to "go dogger" for boys playing pitch-and-toss, and that if they were caught they would have to go to prison. Of course, I can't tell them it's wicked to gamble, because so many rich people do it, and so many good people do it on the Stock Exchange. And it wouldn't do to make them

think all these good people are doing something wicked.'

The quickness of repartee of the London Street boy, his humour, and his original sayings were a great delight to Stanton.

Here are two stories that Stanton told to illustrate the gifts of the London street boy:

'One day I was going through Bell Court, and I saw a bright little chap whistling. I did not know him from Adam, but he was whistling so gaily he made all the houses ring with his little whistle, and I felt quite jealous. So I said to him: "Sonny, I wish I could whistle like you." The boy answered: "So you could, guv'nor, if you was to try." But I said: "No, my boy, you are wrong there. At my time of life these lips could never form such a sibilant sound." Then the boy said: "Chuck it, old 'un—chuck it; yer ain't goin' to snuff it yet."'

The second story is more religious:

'When Father Hankey died in London (he was in a nursing home) I went to see him. There was a little boy from St. Mary's, Graham Street, who saw me go to the home. He was very fond of the Father; and after I saw Father Hankey, I came down feeling quite certain that he was going to die. So I said to the little lad: "Sonny, Father Hankey is going to die"; and then I felt so troubled about it that I said rather unfaithfully, "I don't know how it is, sonny, GOD seems to take away all the most helpful, dear, loving, sweet people, and leave all those that swear and carry on; and Father Hankey is going to die. Why *does* GOD take away dear, sweet, holy people and leave those that carry on?" What do you think the lad said? Well, he said: "Father, I suppose He leaves the wicked ones in order that they may have

time to repent." It was not a bad answer, was it ?'

One more 'boy' story that Stanton told.

'On the occasion of a diocesan inspection in a neighbouring parish, when the inspector put the pertinent question, "Who is the Head of the Church ?" a little friend of mine who had come from St. Alban's parish answered without hesitation, "Why, Father Stanton."'

Apart from the boys, old and young, well behaved and disreputable, who called Stanton 'Father' and 'Dad,' there were many mothers in St. Alban's parish who knew him for a good friend, and for whom he was also 'Dad.' In the earlier years, in especial, the domestic services he rendered in fevered courts and overcrowded tenements were never forgotten. 'I have seen the dear, good Father' (someone wrote to the *Daily Citizen* on Stanton's death) 'scrubbing cheerfully away at the pots and pans of an old woman who was confined to her bed by rheumatism. As he worked he hummed cheerily a merry little song. Whenever he knocked at the doors of any of the flats in Holborn, almost invariably the salutation which greeted him was, "Why, it's the dear old Father! Do come in." No one could ever talk to him for five minutes and not love him. His eyes were the most expressive I have ever seen, and he was always smiling.'

The St. Alban's Mothers' Meeting was started in July, 1863, by Mackonochie. 'It began with 30, and now numbers 200,' Stanton wrote last year, adding, 'we do not admit anyone outside the parish; but if they leave the parish we do not turn them out. Two of the clergy visit the meetings, which happen twice a week, and read and talk and amuse them. The meetings are not con-

ducted as a specially religious occasion, for it was thought with so many services at the church the mothers have plenty of opportunity of going when they wish. Every summer we have an excursion, generally to Southend, and in the winter a treat with music and acting and a present of a blanket or quilt.' The excursion was a great event, and altogether the Mothers' Meeting was one of Father Stanton's most cherished parochial societies. The Rev. W. A. Pearkes, who has been a curate at St. Alban's since 1900, is always associated with the Mothers' Meeting too.

'Apropos of not introducing religion,' said Stanton, in reference to his Mothers' Meeting, 'the lady from the Parochial Mission Womens' Society once came in and said: "I suppose, Father Stanton, that you read these women a chapter out of the Bible while they are at work?" "Well, no," I said, "I have just finished 'Adam Bede,' and now I'm reading 'Nicholas Nickleby.' "But don't you say a collect—the collect of the week, for instance—before beginning the reading? Surely you say a collect?" As the collect for the week—it was the second Sunday in Advent—happened to be "Blessed LORD, Who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning," I did not think it would quite do for "Nicholas Nickleby."'

In the same spirit Stanton answered the worthy and godly gentleman who came one evening to look over one of Stanton's workmen's clubs in Brooke Street—a club where cards were allowed and the drinking of beer permitted. It was a well-furnished building, with quite handsome fittings—the house has long since been pulled down to make room for flats—and Stanton bore pretty well all the expense of starting that club. The

visitor expressed general approval of the place, shaking his head over the cards and beer, and then turned to the founder of the club and said: 'And I hope, Mr. Stanton, in the midst of these comforts for the working man, you sometimes mention the One Thing Needful?' 'Oh, no, my dear fellow,' Stanton replied, 'we never talk about that here. We leave that for church, you know. I play a game of cards sometimes, and we sing songs and amuse ourselves; but I never talk about religion.'

And the respectable and eminently worthy visitor departed, more puzzled than ever at 'the goings on' at St. Alban's.

The Pharisees were always finding fault with something at St. Alban's. Now it was the incense in church, or the cards and drink in the workman's club, or the Confessional. Sometimes the clergy were blamed for being Formalists and Ritualists; at other times they were reproached for being too free and easy. It didn't matter; the men and women of St. Alban's loved 'Dad'—so the world might do its worst.

Once Stanton replied in the Press to those critics who desire to prevent their fellow-Christians from confessing their sins in their own way—the old Catholic way. It was a time when Bishops were inclined to favour the critics bent on 'the suppression of the Mass and the Confessional' in the Church of England.

'Why do we spend these summer Saturday afternoons hearing confessions,' Stanton wrote, 'when, if we consulted our own pleasure, we would rather be anywhere else? Why, because when at our ordinations the Bishops gave us power to absolve sinners we believed that they truly did what they professed to do.'

'Dad'—the Good Samaritan

To those many thousand weary sin-laden souls who came to his Confessional Arthur Stanton was as surely a 'Father' as he was to his postmen, his mothers, his lads of the street, and to all that army of the night who blessed his name, but rarely crossed the threshold of St. Alban's Church.

CHAPTER VII

SOME PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

When we think about Father Stanton and his life at St. Alban's, Holborn, certain personal characteristics of this valiant, large-hearted man of God come readily to mind.

Religion and goodwill were always visible in his life, but other qualities, not in every case possessed by persons of religion and goodwill, stand out. Unfailing generosity, fearlessness, the courage of the rebel, perennial humour, a social ease with all manner of folk, wonderful toleration, and steadfast loyalty to his friends—these are amongst the things we remember, and do well to remember, in any estimate of Father Stanton's life.

He was a comparatively rich man all his days. But the money left to Stanton by his relatives never seemed to him an absolute personal possession. It was rather a trust which involved much responsibility; the money was the property of his family, and the capital was left untouched to be restored, by his will, to the family. So at his death a considerable sum was left. (It was the same with William Morris: he, too, left a large sum which he had inherited and never touched.) Stanton lived on the interest of the property, and out of this income spent freely on others: on

relatives, on workmen's clubs in Brooke Street, on the St. Martin's League, and the Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth, on the poor and needy, and on all the desolate and oppressed—deserving and undeserving—who sought his help. But his name never figured in subscription lists to be seen of men. He drew no salary from the Church of England, or from St. Alban's, all the fifty years of his ministry. It may be asked, When he had met every appeal and bestowed gifts on so many, what remained for strictly personal expenditure? Let his most intimate and observant friend, the Rev. E. F. Russell, answer:

'Well, I can honestly say that of all the men I have known I have never met anyone who had succeeded in bringing down his own personal wants and expenses to such small dimensions as he. Two rooms and his board—good, ample, but not luxurious—were found for him in the clergy house. For these he paid; in truth, he over-paid. And in these rooms every piece of furniture, beyond the house property, was a gift; and so for the most part were the books upon his shelves. He had no hobbies; he collected nothing; nor had he any tastes which cost money. As for his raiment, I seem to remember the same garments doing duty for years until they shone, lost their original colour, and went into holes and frayed edges. I am puzzled to think in what way his life could have been made more simple.'

'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' Yet, here in Brooke Street, Holborn, was a man who lived amongst us for fifty years, and having great possessions, joyfully spent them on his neighbours, discerning that money—the mammon of injustice—could well be used in making friends And when the

hour struck on March 27, 1913, and the uses of money were over for Arthur Stanton, most surely the prayers of his friends went up that his soul might enter the eternal habitations of the blessed.

Then, the fearlessness of Father Stanton so closely allied with the courage of the rebel. Submitting himself to the discipline of the service of GOD, and the laws of the Christian Church as he read them, enlisted in a service which is 'perfect freedom,' he was the less inclined to submit to the commandments of men, and would on no account render to Cæsar the things which to him, at least, were plainly not Cæsar's, but GOD's. Episcopal reproof, censure, and inhibition might limit the missionary field of Father Stanton's zeal for the welfare of man, and root up all enthusiasm or affection for the Church of England 'as by law established,' but could not persuade him to moderate his message, or diminish the doctrine he was constrained to preach. The decisions of law courts in matters ecclesiastical left him equally undisturbed in the practice of his faith. Neither bishop nor lawyer had any power to make Stanton preach any other Gospel but that which he had accepted in early manhood as the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST. Moderation in the preaching of that Gospel, out of any deference to authority, would have been to Stanton a betrayal of his commission as a minister of CHRIST. Moderation where principles of eternal importance were concerned was impossible. 'As well talk of a moderately virtuous woman, or a moderately honest man, as a moderate Churchman or moderate Christian.' And in any case moderation and prudence were not the qualities Stanton esteemed and cultivated. His was the glorious wisdom which the world counts folly—the Divine

recklessness of the man who hath found the treasure hid in a field, 'and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.' Stanton had found the pearl of great price, and would part with all that the world could give to buy it.

The fearless indifference to the thunders of episcopal rebuke was matched by a complete inability to be awed by the conventions of polite society—a society obviously non-Christian in its social ethics. Arthur Stanton was by general consent, and in any and every sense of that much-strained word, a gentleman. That was indisputable. It was not, as the *Saturday Review* remarked, that 'he never forgot that he was a gentleman'; he probably never remembered it. But he was a gentleman at the court of CHRIST, and under knightly obligation to serve the least and the meanest of CHRIST'S brethren, and no courtier in the palaces of the kings of the earth. The raiment he wore was not, any more than it was in the case of St. John the Baptist, the livery of those found in king's palaces. Social conventions, unless founded on the commandments of GOD or the goodwill of man, were not in themselves necessarily pleasing or displeasing to Stanton. He could adapt himself with ease to the customs of his neighbours. But the social conventions that deepened and widened the gulf between man and man, or were required to be obeyed as of higher importance than the weightier matters of the law of charity, these were hateful to Father Stanton. His whole life was a standing witness against such conventions.

The rebel in Stanton is seen in his politics, in his steady championship of the mass of disinherited folks, and in his willing support of causes not

thought popular in the Church of England. Holding quite aloof from all the recognised and well-supported High Church organisations and from 'May meetings,' Stanton preached for and gave his blessing to the Guild of St. Matthew, the Church and Stage Guild, and the Guild of St. Edmund; for these three societies were not of the kind that bring clerical promotion, or gain rewards and favours from those with patronage to bestow.

The Guild of St. Matthew and the Church and Stage Guild are now extinct. The former was a society of Christian Socialists, men and women of Radical and democratic convictions, and it existed to justify GOD to the people. The Rev. Stewart D. Headlam was its warden, and Mr. Frederick Verinder for many years its secretary. In the main the work of the G.S.M. was to get rid of common misunderstandings as to the Christian Creeds and the Christian Church, and to support legislative proposals that promised a fuller and more abundant life for all The Guild regarded the Christian Church as a divinely instituted society for carrying on CHRIST'S work for the liberation of mankind, and it called on all Church-people to take an active part in politics on the democratic side. Naturally, it was not a guild that authority in Church or State looked kindly upon, and the more particularly since its warden took an untiring and incorrigible interest in contemporary politics, and was a most outspoken critic of all that savoured of injustice.

Stanton preached a sermon in St. Thomas's, Charterhouse, E.C., in 1880, at the first service held by the Guild of St. Matthew; and on this occasion he did not take a text out of the Bible, but mentioned that on a little tombstone in a

little churchyard in Brittany was an epitaph which, translated from the French, read: 'Born a man, and died a grocer.' On this theme he discoursed, the point of the sermon being that the raiment, the trappings, the occupations of mankind, were apt to be thought of more value than manhood itself. In the course of the next fifteen years Stanton often preached for the Guild of St. Matthew at St. Mary's Church in Charing Cross Road, and it was in that church he preached from time to time for the Church and Stage Guild.

Of the Church and Stage Guild Mr. Stewart D. Headlam was the honorary secretary and the moving spirit of its activities. Nowadays clergymen of the Church of England are more well disposed to the theatre than they were thirty years ago, and the Church and Stage Guild, which set out not only to affirm the high calling of the play-actor, and the importance of the stage, but also to do as much for professional dancers, and for the ballet and the music-hall, helped considerably to bring about this change of mind. It was for supporting music-halls and the ballet that Mr. Headlam got into hot water with Dr. Temple, when that formidable Prelate was Bishop of London, and Stanton came out quite frankly on Mr. Headlam's side in a lecture he gave on 'Amusement' to the Guild of St. Edmund on October 16, 1894—at a time when Puritan feeling on the London County Council was running strongly against music-halls.

'In a place like London,' said Stanton, in the course of his lecture, 'where the brain was so exercised, and where in the winter-time it was so terribly dull, everybody required amusement. And amusement was delightful. Health depended to some extent upon our being amused. Consequently the amusers became ministers, and their

powers were not to be despised. It was funny of people to say they would go to a theatre, but not to a music-hall. There are some who do not mind attending a dramatic performance at the Crystal Palace, but in London will never patronise the play-house. Now, I think that at the music-halls there is a greater variety of entertainment, and often more fun and amusement than at a theatre. If there is anything wrong we have got to improve the taste of the public. But it can't be just to close the music-halls.'

It was years after this that Stanton put it to a friend of his, Father D——, a Roman Catholic priest, whether he (Stanton) would have made more of a success of his ministry if he had been a Roman Catholic. 'My dear Stanton,' was the reply, 'I don't think you would have made a success, as you call it, of the priesthood in any Church where obedience to constituted authority was required.'

Stanton's irrepressible humour has been commented on over and over again. It bubbled up from a fount of goodwill, and was untainted by bitterness. It broke out in the pulpit, in casual conversation, and in that quick answer, which is often quite as potent as the soft answer in turning away wrath. Of course, there were times when it shocked people; but, then, Stanton believed that it was good for certain people to be shocked.

On questions of Church ritual Stanton was always ready-witted with dull and pompous critics.

Once a visitor to St. Alban's suggested that the use of incense and processional lights was not wise, and Stanton answered immediately: 'My dear fellow, not wise! Why, there are only two sets of people called "wise" in the Gospels—the

"wise" men who offered incense, and the "wise" virgins who carried processional lights.'

Another visitor objected to the *smell* of incense. 'Well,' said Stanton, 'there are only two stinks in the next world: incense and brimstone; and you've got to choose between them.'

Once at Woolwich, when Stanton and Dolling were passing down a street together, a private soldier called out to a friend: 'Look at those two —— Popes!' Stanton turned round, and said, in mild, reproachful tones: 'Now, you shouldn't call us "Popes"; it's not at all a kind thing to say. Why, we are respectable Protestant clergymen belonging to the Established Church.' The soldier was staggered, and became one of Stanton's friends.

One August day in London I met Stanton accidentally outside a Tube station, and he got talking about the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady. 'What I don't understand,' said Stanton, 'is this: all good Protestants say their own mothers have been assumpted into heaven, and yet they won't have it that CHRIST'S own Blessed Mother has been taken up.'

When asked what authority there was for keeping this Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Stanton replied: 'Why, the authority of the City Temple, of course. Didn't Dr. Parker give out (when Mrs. Parker died) that Mary had gone to heaven? You wouldn't have the assumption of Mrs. Parker kept at the City Temple, without the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary being kept at St. Alban's?'

Stanton's ease with his neighbours in every walk of life, and his wonderful toleration in religion and in social intercourse, were rooted in his love for humankind. Seeing this world as a place

of joyful pilgrimage and missionary endeavour, the career he had chosen called forth for those whom he met day by day both sympathy and understanding, and the aid thus sought was never lacking. This is what was meant when people said Father Stanton was 'always a gentleman.' His sympathy and understanding, inspired by the sense of common kinship with all CHRIST'S brethren—whether of the household of faith or not, and with all the children of a Heavenly FATHER—left no room for the vulgarity that fattens on the disparaging of neighbours, and finds an uncouth delight in making much of the faults of others, and noting their want of grace. Stanton perceived that manners and customs vary with races, nations, tribes, and families, and are not the same, and need not be the same, in all classes of society. Hence, he did not appear either shocked or hurt at what are called lapses of taste, because, in his case, these things really did not shock or hurt. Provost Ball has referred to this social catholicity of Stanton's: 'I have seen him in the company of the underbred, making himself quite at home with them, laughing at their jokes, adopting their phrases, and so forth, never, however, condoning the least approach to coarseness.' Many other friends of Stanton's have spoken in similar fashion of his comfortable habit of being at home with all sorts of queer neighbours. It was all on a par with his religious toleration. It wasn't that Stanton didn't value Catholic ritual that he could adapt himself to simple Protestant services, joining in a prayer-meeting, or listening to an Evangelical sermon in the barest or ugliest of non-Catholic places of worship. The unity of faith that was beneath externals was more to him than breaches of

Church order. The latter might be regrettable, but the thing to rejoice over was the actual possibility of living in religious goodwill in spite of differences in Church discipline.

So in social life. Stanton knew all about good manners and good taste. But many of his friends and neighbours at St. Alban's, whose jokes and pleasantries might be very trying to others, were too dear to him for any distress to arise at the absence of high conversational tone. Faulty grammar, or drinking tea out of a saucer, were not offences in Stanton's eyes that could break the bonds of brotherhood. Were men and women to be cast out of fellowship because they had their own fancies in the pronunciation of words, and in what constituted wit and humour? Or because they ate peas with a knife, and bought their smart clothes at the second-hand dealer's? To suppose such a thing possible or desirable was to narrow social life in a way that would never have suited Father Stanton.

Yet, with all this good fellowship, that made nothing of class distinctions, and left no place for the antipathies over trifles that disfigure human intercourse and hinder our social life, Stanton had a great personal dignity, and was not the man with whom liberties could be taken. Respecting others; seeing in every poor fallen man or woman some image of the Divinity he worshipped; knowing how many of earth's failures had come to their low estate of body and soul at the hands of the thieves who infested the highway, and left their victim prostrate on the road to Jerusalem, wounded and despoiled, to await the coming of the Good Samaritan, Stanton received the respect he yielded to all GOD's little ones. There

was something about him—a rare fragrance of character, a distinguished presence, a splendid grandeur of spirit—that commanded and drew out and maintained this respect, and kept this respect compatible with easy brotherliness and wide affection.

The loyalty of Stanton to his friends, too, was so fine and beautiful. Loyalty to his friends of St. Alban's, rich and poor, religious and non-religious, godly and lawless, lads of the streets and worshippers in the church. Loyalty to his brother-clergy at St. Alban's all that fifty years; to Mackonochie in those prolonged years of strife; to his successor, Father Suckling; to the closest of all his friends, Father Russell, whose advice in all matters that threatened the peace of St. Alban's and the conduct of its services in later years, Stanton held should have ready obedience; to Father Hogg and his Guild of St. Edmund.

He kept his friendship with the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam to the last. 'The other day I sent him my blessing by Father Hogg,' Mr. Headlam writes in April, 1913; 'and he sent back word, "Tell him I value it more than I would the Pope's."' For it was the blessing of a friend, and that to Stanton was dearer than the blessing of a stranger in Rome, though that stranger might be CHRIST'S chief Vicar on earth.

Stanton, for all he loved London and its people, and Holborn more than any other part of London —'Holborn is the healthiest place in London, for it stands high on gravelly soil,' he insisted—was country born, and kept all his life many of the countryman's feelings. He was particularly interested in the weather, and liked to write about it in the St. Alban's monthly paper. 'He was more weather-wise than any man I ever knew,'

Father Russell has told us. 'He kept records of the movements of the barometer, and studied the weather forecast with great care. On any day he might be seen at the window on the second floor of the clergy house watching the clouds and the direction of the wind, and we always consulted him as to the prospects of the day, sun or rain, heat or cold. All shapes and hues of beauty appealed to him in a very intimate way, but the beauty of the clouds, their forms, colours, and illumination pleased him most of all.'

The village churches of England, too, were of unfailing interest to Father Stanton. The shrine within them might be empty, and no longer a lamp before their altars announced the Presence of GOD; but they were still consecrated by the worship of centuries, and who could tell but that in GOD's good time the Presence might be restored?

Stanton was not a literary man; not a great reader of books, or of omnivorous appetite for printed matter. Neither did he add much of his own to the world's store of printed books. He gave his name to the little manual of 'Catholic Prayers for Church of England People'; collected from the Bible the words of the cantata 'Mater Christi,' so often sung at St. Alban's in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and compiled a book of prayer called 'A Novena to the Holy Ghost.'

Probably because he had no particular desire to read all the latest new books, the books he did read impressed him the more.

But the literature that Stanton read and re-read till much of it was graved on his heart, and came readily to his lips, was the Bible. For him it was indeed the Book of books, containing the

priceless words of truth and life, and a wealth of treasure that not all the rest of the books ever written could match. A lady once asked Stanton what book he would advise her to read during Lent. 'I told her,' said Stanton, 'why not read the Bible?

CHAPTER VIII

THE PASSING OF FATHER STANTON

On that Sunday, November 24, 1912, at St. Alban's, Stanton was out of health—a rare thing for him, whose strength even in old age was far beyond the average—but he went down to Colchester the next day, 'against the persuasion of his oldest and most intimate friend, who offered to go in his place,' to keep a long-promised engagement to preach, all the same. Sickness overtook him on the journey; but the sermon—his last sermon—was delivered, and he got back to the Clergy House in Brooke Street, Holborn. 'I should like best to be taken to the hospital, to King's; but it would distress my people,' Stanton said on the night of his return, when it seemed clear that he was in for a serious illness. For seven weeks he remained in the Clergy House, attended by Dr. Sainsbury, and nursed with all the care that skill and affection could bring. 'To be out of the way, I suggested that I should be taken to a nursing-home; but that could not be, so the second floor of the Clergy House had to be converted into a hospital, and that all through Christmas-time.'*

In the new year there was a decided improve-

* A. H. S., to Rev. E. F. Russell.

ment, and on January 16, Father Stanton left Brooke Street for his sister's house, his old home at Upfield, Stroud.

The Rev. E. F. Russell in 'A Communication to Friends' (St. Alban's Monthly Paper), has left us an account of the last days:

'The day in January fixed for the move from the Clergy House to Stroud in Gloucestershire was carefully timed. Father Stanton was then able to walk downstairs without assistance, and to take his place in his nephew's motor, which was to take him to Paddington. (Dr. Sainsbury saw him into the train, and a nurse and his nephew, Mr. Arthur William Stanton, travelled with Father Stanton to Stroud). The journey to Stroud was accomplished without any excessive fatigue, and that night he slept well in a room prepared for him upon the ground-floor at Upfield, the house in which he was born. The change of air and scene and room proved most beneficial. His bedroom in the Clergy House was small and dark and inconvenient. At Upfield the spacious room was, when I saw it first, full of sunshine, which streamed in through large windows, which reached to near the ground, and through which he could—even from his bed—look out upon the lawn and its fringe of shrubs and sheltering trees, and beyond them to the fields which sloped upwards to the Cotswold Hills and to the sky. His native air and home with its surroundings and associations proved at once both sedative and tonic, and he grew steadily stronger and more and more able to resume his old habits of food and exercise. In due course he was allowed to take drives, in carriage and in motor, making excursions of increasing range, and between whiles he would walk about the

garden, or, when the sun was warm, sit in the sunshine, wrapped in his rug, at the entrance of the greenhouse, reading, or watching the many tokens of the spring.'

To his old friend, Provost Ball, Stanton wrote from Upfield at the end of January: 'All the little incidents of boyhood right through become dear, even to the tiniest, and how I long to go and see the old trees, fields, houses, and paths of sixty years ago.' To Father Russell he wrote on January 30: 'Tell them all (at St. Alban's) I am looking forward to the day when I can thank them personally.' And on February 2: 'I am getting on all right, but the process is slow, and I am still nursed.'

The Bishop of London (Dr. Winnington Ingram), wrote to Stanton on March 6, asking him whether he would accept a Prebendal Stall in St. Paul's, 'in memory of the fifty years of service that you have given at St. Alban's?' The Bishop went on to say, quite cordially: 'It is a great pleasure to me to offer you the Stall, and I very much hope that you will see your way to accept it. I feel sure that it will give great pleasure to all your friends to do so.'

(A 'Prebendal Stall in St. Paul's' involves no particular responsibility nor the acceptance of any large stipend, but the offer was a compliment.)

Stanton declined to be 'a cathedral dignitary,' and in any case the offer came too late. He sent the following reply to the Bishop:

'Upfield, Stroud,
'*March* 8, 1913.

'My dear Bishop,

'It would be a pleasure to me to do what would be a pleasure to you. But I couldn't be a "Prebendary." I shall never forget your kind

thought and wish in the matter—but there are many reasons, many more than I can put into a letter, why I am utterly unfitted and unsuited to be a cathedral dignitary. I think my ministry is closing. I have not hinted this at St. Alban's, but the nature of my illness, my age, and family circumstances all point to this, and I could not occupy any position anywhere. I *never* was fit for it. Don't say anything more about it; and, if your kind offer *should* come out, say it was declined on the score of age and health. Only one thing I ask of you and those who want to show me kindness, and that is: to let me, after my fifty years' run, slow down quietly into the terminus, not jerking over the points.

'My one consolation in my long illness is this: it has withdrawn me behind the scenes, and there I would remain.

'You will, I hope, think of me as sincere and grateful for your kindness, and will take this as final.

'Always yours,
'ARTHUR HENRY STANTON.'

With a short friendly note from the Bishop, mentioning that 'as a diocese we really are most grateful for your fifty years' work of love' the correspondence closed.

In the middle of March there was an unfavourable change, with the report of disquieting symptoms of pulse and temperature, and Dr. Sainsbury was summoned from London to confer with Dr. Hardy, Stanton's Stroud doctor. The relapse turned out to be an attack of gastritis, which sent the patient back once more to bed, and to the diet of the first months of his illness. A day or two later Dr. Sainsbury paid a second visit, and

soon it seemed that the attack had spent its force. Life was returning slowly at Easter to the level reached before this second bout of illness, and on the Wednesday in Easter Week, March 26, Father Russell, Stanton's friend and comrade for forty-six years at St. Alban's, went down to Stroud to give him his Easter Communion.

We may quote again from the Rev. E. F. Russell's 'Communication to Friends':

'So on Wednesday in Easter Week I went by one of the earlier trains to Stroud, and was overjoyed to find our friend looking—so I judged—better than when I saw him last. We had during the day much talk of many things. He wanted to know about everybody and everything at home. In February he had written to me: "I don't think much about the goings-on at St. Alban's—not to be vexed at being out of everything." But now he was eager to hear everything; full of interest in the most ordinary details of our daily life and work, and laughing heartily at the little jokes and stories that I told him. . . .

'In the evening of Wednesday he bid me fetch from a certain drawer his "treasury," a little canvas bag of money, and then to take paper and pencil and jot down certain commissions, for which he gave me the money. Then he handed to me a ten-pound note, telling me that somebody had sent this for the poor of the parish. "Will you give this," he said, "to the Sisters for the poor. I should like it to be given to the *undeserving* poor, to those who do not come to church." Then we planned what we should do about his Communion, and, because of the doctor's orders about food, settled that he should have it soon after midnight. I suggested that I should say Mass in another room, and bring him the

Blessed Sacrament, to save him fatigue; but he would not hear of this, so at midnight I went to him. He made his confession, and I said the Easter Mass and gave him his Easter Communion.

'Next day' (Thursday, March 27) 'I found him no whit the worse for the effort of the night. We talked again of many things. He had been reading Bodley's "Essays on Manning," and on the "Decay of Idealism in France"; also a recent book written by one who was a dear friend of us both, "The Story of Francis Horatio," by Hillel Samson.

'The "Essay upon Cardinal Manning," by Mr. J. E. C. Bodley, had been sent to Stanton by Father Hogg, and it interested him greatly, partly because of the new detail it gave about the Cardinal's life and opinions, and partly because of the curious intimacy between the author and his subject. Our discussion soon brought us round to an old contention between us as to the relative merits of the two Cardinals—Manning and Newman. He himself always stood for Manning; not the earlier Manning—ecclesiastic and diplomat—but the later more human Manning. My own sympathies were with Newman. All that I could urge for Newman he parried by the charge of over-subtlety. "Too subtle, too subtle; he could make anything seem true." I could not move him from this, and so, to find a middle point upon which we might agree, I spoke of the simplicity, the beauty, and deep spirituality of Newman's prayers. Here we were instantly at one, and I drew from my pocket a copy I had made of a prayer which I always supposed to be Newman's, but which I cannot now trace in his "Meditations and Devotions"—a prayer to the Holy Spirit. I read it very slowly to him, and at the end he

was silent for a time, and then, very quietly, "How much it covers!" I said that I would leave it with him, and he bid me put it by the crucifix at his side. . . .

'Later that morning in the course of our talk he startled me by asking if I did not think he ought to give up his rooms in the Clergy House. I would not even discuss this with him; it was not to be thought of for a moment, for we were counting upon his return at no very distant date to occupy them. The clock now struck one, and he warned me that it was luncheon-time, and that directly after lunch the carriage was coming to take me to the London train. So we said the Angelus, and I went to lunch and carved for him his first solid meal. Luncheon over, I ran in to bid him farewell, happy in leaving him, as I thought, better, and on his way towards a return to London in a few weeks' time.'

But only the body of Arthur Stanton would return to London; his soul was near its passage from this world of men and women, GOD'S world, which he had loved so well, and none the less because he knew it for a place of pilgrimage. The heart, opened so long to the call of his friends and 'children,' was fully spent, and could beat no more.

It is again Father Russell who tells us how the change came:

'At ten o'clock that same night the day-nurse went off duty, leaving him sleeping quietly; but a little later the night-nurse called her to come quickly, as he had awakened, and his breathing and very rapid pulse indicated serious danger. The doctor was soon there, and everything that mortal skill and care could do was done, but ineffectually.

'His sister and her friend and companion, Miss Winterton, were now by his side, his sister holding his hand to the very end. During the slow hours which followed, the silence was broken only twice; once to thank his nurse, and the second time in response to Miss Winterton, who quoted from Deut. xxxiii. 12: "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety." He seems to have understood this as an announcement of the end, for he answered, "If He wills it, I am willing." It was in the grey dawn, about half an hour before the sunrise, that, in painless peace and in full consciousness, he passed.

* * * * *

'The news of his death reached us in London at 8.15. By the earliest train available I went to Stroud to see if in any way I could comfort the sad hearts there, and to look once more upon the face of my friend, my comrade of every day for six-and-forty years. Upon his breast we placed the crucifix, which he had placed beside his bed, folding his hands over the foot of the Cross, as one who gloried only in the Cross, and clung to it. A growing palm overshadowed his head, and the spring flowers were all about the bed and in the cups of the tall candles which kept watch by his side. Later on they placed him in the coffin made by the village carpenter, an exact repetition of the one made for his sister from his own design.'

So it was that Father Stanton passed from among us, and climbed the 'craggy way and steep and narrow,' which all must tread. It was the fiftieth year of his ministry, and the jubilee of his ordination was kept in GOD's way.

That afternoon of Friday, March 28, the posters of the evening newspapers in London startled us with their bald announcement: 'Death of Father

Stanton.' It was hard to understand that he, whom we had loved so long, was dead. He had been ill we knew, but the previous news had been of convalescence. Of course, he was over seventy, but then he had talked of being 'an old man now' for so long that we were all used to it. Besides, with all his seventy years Stanton never lost the joyous spirit of youth, as far as we could see. And now he was dead, and we should look upon his face no more.

In West-End clubs and the back streets off Holborn, in London suburbs, and in quiet country places, and soon in far-off homes in the Colonies—for the 'children' of St. Alban's are scattered widely over the world—the news was told. Father Stanton, Arthur Stanton, the pastor, and the 'pal'—Father Stanton of St. Alban's, Holborn—had given up his fifty years' curacy, 'sheathing sword no longer needed,' and was at rest.

And hastily, and instinctively, of their charity, those who heard the news, uttered the prayer Stanton first taught them to pray for the dead, that his soul would rest in peace.

At first it was said he would be buried at Stroud, and Stanton himself had declared that he 'didn't mind where they laid his old bones.' For, as he said in one of his Good Friday sermons: 'Our LORD was buried in the midst of His people—in the midst of us. The whole world now is consecrated ground. Wherever we are buried, it matters not, it is *all* GOD'S acre.' But permission was given by his relatives for the body to be brought to St. Alban's and then taken to the St. Alban's ground at Brookwood.

On the Sunday morning at St. Alban's Father Suckling, the Vicar, spoke in words that faltered of the numerous letters that had been received,

and then said something of the secret of Stanton's influence.

'How was it that he was able to touch the hearts of hundreds and thousands? I have known him since the year 1860, and am privileged to recall to my memory that I walked with him when he went to take up the arduous work under Father Mackonochie in 1862 in this parish and in this great city; yet I speak second to some who are here. But I have no doubt that what influenced us all was the marvellous reality of the consecration of his life. He was so genuine. There are here those who can never forget his influence, the tone which surrounded him. And we can never forget certain texts of Holy Scripture he was so fond of treasuring up in his heart. In the days when there are people who with shallow profanation speak lightly of the sacred Scriptures we never heard anything but the strongest defence, not only of the Holy Scriptures, but of the very central fact of them—the Incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. He was no Deist. The Bible was nothing to him without the Centre. It was everything to him, his strength in time of weakness and in time of joy. That influenced me, and, I am persuaded, hundreds and thousands of others. And then there is the fact of which I can speak, having known him before he was ordained, and his manner of life, that he was as one who wore unstained through a spotless life his baptismal garment.'

On Monday evening they brought the coffin into the church. It was Father Stanton's last 'Monday-night sermon' this, for the dead resting there within the chancel spoke in its silence as eloquently as the living within the pulpit had spoken of the life lived for GOD and man. And

all that evening, until the time came for the Office of the Dead to be sung, a long line of mourners passed up the aisles and knelt for a moment by the coffin ; and some would place their lips against the coffin in token of their love. They were mostly the people of St. Alban's who made that long line of mourners — men and women, fathers and mothers with their children, many of them, and young men from workshops and offices ; business men, too, on their way home, and hospital nurses. All through the night the watch was kept in the church ; and all next morning from six o'clock was the Holy Eucharist offered for the repose of the soul of Arthur Henry Stanton.

At eight o'clock was the Children's Requiem, with Father Russell at the organ, and Father Hogg celebrating, and all the children of the parish there, it seemed. Numbers of these little ones brought tiny bunches of flowers to lay on the coffin.

When the Children's Service was over people began to gather for the Solemn Requiem. Tickets had to be issued for this, because it was impossible to find room for all who sought to be there. Miss Emily Stanton—Father Stanton's sister—and other relatives were present. More than a hundred clergymen came to do honour to the dead ; and these included Canon Newbolt, of St. Paul's ; the Rev. L. S. Wainwright, of St. Peter's, London Docks, a former warden of one of the St. Martin's League's Houses ; and the Rev. Arthur Tooth, the first of the clergy to be imprisoned for ritual, in the old days of legal prosecutions. But there was no representative of the Episcopate at the funeral of Father Stanton, nor were there many whom the world would call persons of importance in that vast congregation that

filled the church. Lady Henry Somerset was there; among the devout laymen, the Duke of Newcastle, the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell, and Mr. Ian Malcolm, M.P., churchwarden of All Saints', Margaret Street. The Rev. R. J. Campbell came across from the City Temple—had not Father Stanton been present at Dr. Parker's funeral service?—representing the least orthodox of Nonconformists. But the great bulk of the congregation were the 'old guard' of St. Alban's, and the regular worshippers at the church, who are not to be classified by any system of social caste.

The Solemn Requiem was rendered in the customary way of the Catholic Church—only the service was in English—and at its close the final absolutions of the dead were given. Mr. Suckling was the celebrant, and Mr. Hogg and Mr. Russell were the assisting ministers.

Out in Brooke Street a crowd was steadily collecting while the Requiem was sung within the church. At noon the pavements were lined, and hawkers went about with 'Father Stanton's Memorial Card.' On this card were the words: 'The blessings of the poor follow him, for he was their best friend for fifty years.'

It was not till one o'clock that the funeral procession came out of the church gate into Brooke Street. The churchwardens, Mr. H. Longden (churchwarden of St. Alban's since 1889), and Mr. F. E. Sidney marched first, followed by a thurifer, with smoking censer, and then by one who carried high aloft a crucifix, and had torch-bearers for his companions. The choir came next, and after them a great company of clergy in surplices.

Wheeled on a low bier came the coffin The flowers piled up within the church were left behind. Only a purple pall, whereon was the dead man's

biretta, was over the coffin, and in front of that pall, in big white letters, were the familiar initials, A. H. S. Six men wheeled the bier, and at the corners of the pall were the four clergy of St. Alban's; three of them, bent with age, had borne Mackonochie to his grave more than twenty-five years ago.

Father Stanton's relatives were immediately behind the bier, and they were followed by the Brotherhood of Jesus of Nazareth with their scarlet badges. And then, four abreast, came the men of the congregation, and behind them fell in many who had been waiting in the streets. For Stanton's friends were there in force to see 'the old Father' home. Postmen in uniform—a remnant of St. Martin's League—Sisters of Mercy, mothers with babes in their arms, a detachment of the Salvation Army, a company of Boy Scouts, men and women who had left their work for the time, all fell in and found a place in the ranks till the procession was more than a mile long.

It was the dinner hour; and as we slowly moved along Holborn the streets were lined with spectators who stood and watched respectfully the crucifix that was carried on high, and the lines of clergy, and the bier, and the long procession of the common people behind. And men uncovered in presence of the dead, and here and there they crossed themselves in these London streets, and no word of discord was uttered. At times during the march some of the Father's favourite hymns were sung, and 'Rock of Ages,' 'JESUS, Lover of my Soul,' and 'Peace, perfect Peace,' might be heard. The alleluias of the Easter hymn, 'The Strife is O'er,' rang out clear just before the station was reached. But for the most part we walked in silence.

In Kingsway the bell of Holy Trinity Church was tolling while the procession passed, and lower down on the opposite side of the road, the purple, white, and green flag of the Women's Social and Political Union was half-mast high above their offices. The traffic was stayed when the Strand was reached, and then we crossed Waterloo Bridge and turned round into York Road. There the crowd was very dense on the pavement—the same respectful and reverent crowd—for it is a neighbourhood of mean streets, and the poor are always respectful to the dead. At the All Saints' Mission in York Road, on the steps of the church, the clergy and a cross-bearer had taken up their places to pay silent tribute, and all along the route were those who stood at windows and on roofs and balconies to bid the Father a good-bye. When the Necropolis Station was entered in Westminster Bridge Road, 800 mourners went on with the train to Brookwood, but they were only a small part of the procession. The rest turned away to go back to their posts in this workaday world, this world of London, whose streets Father Stanton's feet would no more tread.

At the graveside in St. Alban's private burial ground, hard by where Mackonochie and Robert Dolling rest, the final prayers were said, and the body of Arthur Henry Stanton was committed to the earth whence it had come. And the hundreds of men and women gathered there, to whom Stanton had taught something of the meaning of life, whom he had saved from despair, or lifted by his friendship from the mire, knew that henceforth for them there would be a gap in life that none could fill, a blank that would remain till the end.

The skies were grey and lowering on that April day of Father Stanton's funeral, but the rain did

not come down till the late afternoon. It beat heavily on the carriage windows on the journey back to London. The dead are blessed, they say, upon whom the rain falls at their burial; and so Father Stanton's resting should be greatly blessed. The love he had given so lavishly brought many harvests, and 'love shall be love till death—and perhaps beyond.' Blessed by man, and blessed by God, well may Arthur Stanton rest in peace.

'Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. Amodo jam dicit Spiritus, ut requiescant a laboribus suis: opera enim illorum sequuntur illos.'

CHAPTER IX

AFTERWORDS

MANY things were said in praise of Father Stanton after his funeral, both in the Press and in the pulpit, but more especially in the Press.

The Rev. E. F. Russell preached at St. Alban's on the Sunday following, and a part of that memorable sermon may be given here, for no one knew Stanton more intimately than did Father Russell:

'It is the great fundamental characteristic of this man whom London so lately has delighted to honour, that he loved the LORD JESUS CHRIST. We push past the leaf and the flower and the fruit, past his fervid eloquence, the charm of his own personality, all that "distinction" in every word and act and movement of the man, until we come deep down to the root out of which it all sprang, and we find that it was the love of the Good Shepherd—the love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Out of that love, that root-love, sprang his simplicity, his single-mindedness, his unartificiality, the unconventionality of his ways, the directness of his speech, the plainness and frankness of his dealing with men. Out of it sprang also his glowing enthusiasm, and with it a fine sobriety, a self-control and common sense which never lost its footing; out of it, too, sprang

that wonderful sympathy known to everyone of us, probably personally, that overflowing sympathy which simply enfolded everyone who came near to him. And this same love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST it was which governed all his outward action on the world about him. Loving CHRIST, he had learned to find CHRIST everywhere. He found CHRIST in the Holy Scriptures, and he loved Him there; he found His mind, His words, the story of His life, and they were sweet as honey—sweet as no other words ever were to him. And in the Sacraments he found and loved CHRIST, more especially the great Sacrament of the altar; for if the Holy Scriptures are the mind of CHRIST, the Blessed Sacrament is the very CHRIST Himself: very God and very man, truly, really, and substantially present with us, by His own ordinance, in the Sacrament which is the evidence and the outcome of His love "unto the end."

'And he found CHRIST and loved CHRIST in His Mother, in Mary — Mary, the Mother of CHRIST, and of all who are in CHRIST. To her he looked, as every one of you know so well, as to the Mother of his soul, and her feasts were dear to him, and her image and her pictures and her hymns. He loved her with the tender, reverent devotion of a son.

'And he found CHRIST and loved CHRIST in the souls of men, and, though it may seem perhaps a paradox to say it, most of all in the least worthy; for this was one of the marked features of his love that, like his Master, he loved the lost sheep and the publicans and the sinners. He found CHRIST and loved CHRIST in every man; to him there was neither Greek nor Jew, but CHRIST was all and in all, and this brought him often into friendly

relations with persons and creeds and strange varieties of beliefs or unbeliefs, which at times were misunderstood.'

Notable, too, was the tribute paid to Father Stanton by the Rev. R. J. Campbell at the City Temple on the Thursday:

'On Tuesday morning, as I knelt amid the throng of worshippers in St. Alban's, Holborn, in reverence to the memory of a noble servant of GOD who had entered into his rest, I could not but feel overcome with the thought of how little anything matters in this world except to live for CHRIST. Here was a man in whom for over half a century CHRIST had been sweetly manifest for the healing of broken hearts and the cleansing of sinful lives; and now, as we say, he has been called home. Why, he has been travelling homeward all those fifty years! Death has done nothing except remove the clog of the fleshly body and allow dear Father Stanton's CHRIST-like soul to function in the spiritual body his life has been fashioning for him throughout his beautiful ministry.

'When the service in the church was over, and the procession started towards the distant grave, I saw a poor woman—very poor-looking indeed—step into the aisle and throw a tiny bunch of rather ragged-looking flowers in front of the coffin. They were soon trampled to pieces by the feet of the people who passed over them, but I felt inclined to pick them up and carry them away. The act was so symbolic of the truth we were all engaged in recognising. Father Stanton's spirit was going home over the flower-strewn pathway of the love and gratitude of those to whom he had been a true priest of the risen LORD. And shall one ever forget the sight as the procession

moved down the crowded Holborn thoroughfare! —men and women kneeling in the rainy street as it passed, and even the passengers on the tops of the omnibuses standing with bared heads and joining in the strains of "Rock of Ages"? What a triumphant home-going! I would rather live and die like Father Stanton than wear the proudest diadem that earth could offer; and if I could feel that even one such tribute could be paid to my memory as the casting of those few flowers before his coffin, I should consider it a greater honour than to have been buried with all the pomp and pageantry the world could furnish.'

In the *Pall Mall Gazette* was this poem:

'In Memoriam

'ARTHUR HENRY STANTON

'Cross the worn, patient hands upon his breast,
The hands so swift to comfort and to bless.
Let the tall tapers round about him glow;
The Knight of CHRIST has entered on his rest,
The sword laid down—the struggle and the stress
Give room to peace that none may trouble now.

'The passionate pulse of the great heart is still,
And the unresting spirit is released,
And we who loved him and were loved of him,
The soiled, the sad, broken of heart and will,
Adrift in life—the greatest and the least
Who sought him out when Faith and Hope were dim.

'We found great comfort in his tender strength,
And shared the Vision that he gave to men,
The joy and glory of the Eternal Cross,
Learning to live in that same power at length,
We cannot help but mourn him, even when
A sense of triumph swallows up our loss.

'Father, who kept the banner of CHRIST unfurled,
For fifty years of humble prayer and praise

Here in the London streets you loved and trod,
A challenge to the spirit of the world,
We shall go softly, softly all our days—
Knowing your prayers will help us up to GOD.

'It is not meet that we should toll for him,
Seeing the joy and triumph that must start
Over the sounding of the City's rout
From Holborn s back streets to the world's far rim,
A cry that goes to Heaven from many a heart—
"Thank GOD for Stanton"—Let the bells ring out!'

C. W. H.

And *Truth* had some 'In Memoriam' verses. We quote the first two:

'FATHER STANTON

'Good-bye, Father!
We didn't all agree with you,
Nor eye to eye could see with you
In all you held and said;
But we saw the single mind of you,
The zeal and faith combined of you,
And the shining light you shed.

'Good-bye, Father!
For place Ambition's fighters strive,
Her priests for stalls and mitres strive,
Make gain of serving GOD.
You chose the poor, the lowly road,
Renunciation's holy road,
That the Man of Sorrows trod.'

That old worshipper at St. Alban's, Mr. Selwyn Image, in some beautiful verses on Father Stanton's funeral, wrote:

. . . 'We come
To bear him in affection home—
The Friend we know.'

Finally, from a paper called *The Pelican*, a weekly newspaper chiefly concerned with the

stage and with sporting matters, let us quote a few lines of very friendly testimony:

'The passing of Arthur Henry Stanton, most famous of the famous little band of priests in charge of beautiful St. Alban's Church, Holborn, is an unspeakable loss to the Church of this country, and leaves a dreadful blank in the hearts of the many who knew and loved him. We all knew, of course, that Father Stanton—dear old "Dad" as we called him—had been very ill, but it was hoped that he was well over his trouble, and that he was soon coming back to us.

* * * * *

'He was a great preacher as well as a great parish priest, and he was a very great actor. He had real dramatic genius, which was much helped by his very striking appearance, and he had one of the most beautiful—I use the word advisedly—smiles I ever saw. You remember how beautiful Henry Irving's smile was? Well, Father Stanton's was just like that. With his great gifts he could, no doubt, have had all sorts of preferment if he had wanted it; but he desired nothing other than to remain on for over fifty years an unpaid curate of St. Alban's. He was always at the call of the sorrowful. If anyone was in trouble, there was always "Dad" to turn to. Others might fail, but he at least was sure. "*Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived.*" How the quotation fits!'

The Press generally was as loud in its praises of Father Stanton when death had taken him as it was hostile or contemptuous in the years when St. Alban's was beset by lawsuits, and 'ritualistic parsons' were unpopular. So wide was the influence of that fifty years lived in the Clergy House in Brooke Street, and so deep the impression made by the fifty years' curacy in Holborn.

A 'Stanton Memorial' Committee has been formed, and the Rev. W. Pearkes, of St. Alban's, Holborn, is the Treasurer of the Committee. It is also proposed that there shall be a local memorial at Stroud. Whatever form these memorials take, the memory of Father Stanton is enshrined for all time in the hearts of those who knew him and loved him; and while the Church of St. Alban the Martyr, Holborn, stands it can never be that the name of Arthur Henry Stanton will be forgotten.

'All things that are of the earth shall turn to the earth again: and that which is of the waters doth return into the sea.'

'But these were merciful men, whose justice hath not been forgotten.

'Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.'

THE END

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